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RELIGION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Building Partnerships to End Extreme Poverty

Perspectives: Religious & Faith-based Communities

Compiled Summary Remarks

Moderator

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Opening Remarks

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Accelerating collaboration, partnership and common cause across public and faith sectors

Conference on Religion and Sustainable Development: Building Partnerships to End Extreme Poverty, July 2015

We have talked for years about ‘public/private’ partnerships and now see this as the norm, and see great fruit. This conference presents a unique moment and opportunity to accelerate the growth of transformational ‘public/faith’ partnerships, in the common cause of ending extreme poverty and promoting sustainable development.

1. **The role of faith in human development is pervasive finding corporate expressions in countless ways:** the plethora of faith-inspired NGOs (such as Tearfund, the organisation I have led for 10 years); ubiquitous faith ‘assets’ such as schools, clinics and hospitals; faith networks with global and local reach; and deeply rooted local, national and international advocacy efforts. This is increasingly accepted and acknowledged.
2. **The role of faith goes way beyond these ‘corporate’ expressions. Far more fundamentally faith operates at an individual and personal level, conferring identity, influencing mindsets and behaviours, shaping social norms, defining the narratives we inhabit, and grounding our social networks and relationships.** This process is mediated in numerous ways, through our sacred texts, through our faith leaders, through congregational relationships. This dynamic is especially relevant in the contexts of people living in poverty - here faith is not a side-show, it is integrated into the fabric of life. Throughout my career - in banking and industry, at McKinsey, as a senior public servant, and now at Tearfund - I have been fascinated by what drives human behavior. Indeed, understanding this is widely recognised as an essential key to effective organisational leadership and commercial enterprise.
3. **Traditional economics makes sweeping, simplifying assumptions regarding what drives human behavior** (rational expectations, perfect information, self-interest, utility optimization, etc.). These have helped inform macro level policy. At a micro level things are far more complex and subtle. The 2015 World Development Report ‘Mind, Society & Behaviour’ underscores this point, observing that standard economics has a liability. *“It ignores the psychological and social influences on behavior. Individuals are not calculating automatons. Rather, people are malleable and emotional actors whose decision-making is influenced by contextual cues, local social networks and social norms, and shared mental models. All of these play a role in determining what individuals perceive as desirable, possible, or even “thinkable” for their lives.”*
4. Echoing this, I offer a testimony in two parts - drawn from 10 years at Tearfund.
 - a. **Possibly the greatest challenge - and opportunity - to sustainable, ‘whole-life’ human development at community level is this: How do we change mindsets and behaviours in ways that bring human flourishing?** How do we shift social norms, perceptions of identity, underlying values, the narratives that people inhabit? How do we reinstate human dignity, self-worth, purpose, hope? How do we strengthen the relational capital and local social networks that are so influential to all the above, and key to resilience? This leads many of us into unfamiliar disciplines - behavioural economics, social anthropology, neuro-science, and so on.
 - b. **The role of faith is very powerful, for better and for worse, in shaping all of the above factors** - identity, norms, narratives, values

and, flowing from these, behaviours, mindsets, relationships and networks.

5. **Over the last 10 years I have sought to do everything I can to ensure that faith influences individual and corporate behaviours and mindsets in ways that bring life, not death** – that enable people living in poverty to flourish and communities to be restored.
6. **Across Tearfund's networks we have pursued this agenda in many ways.** We find that these initiatives bring more visible 'whole-life' transformation, in more sustainable ways, at significantly lower cost than alternative more traditional approaches. For example:
 - Influencing theology to embrace fully the centrality of serving the poor and confronting injustice, and challenging Church teaching when it is at odds with scripture, undermining human dignity and worth;
 - Drawing out the implications of scripture on identity, social norms, narratives, networks, and applying scripture to the practical challenges of tackling poverty and injustice;
 - Confronting the Church and its leaders on matters of injustice, prejudice and stigma, especially when this is evident within the Church;
 - Envisioning, equipping and supporting tens of thousands of local churches to love and serve their communities;
 - Building wider faith networks to advocate at local, national and international levels;
 - Producing and disseminating practical resources and tools grounded in scripture, to educate, equip and inspire the wider Church to action against poverty and injustice;
 - Convening, engaging and equipping faith leaders to see and embrace their central role.
7. **My recurring frustration, in pursuing this agenda, is this: I have found it incredibly difficult to engage public sector institutions,** who I know are passionate about the same poverty reduction agenda. Typically I encounter high-level support and encouragement that invariably does not translate into front-line action or policy change. As I reflect on the underlying causes of this 'stand-off', I recognize that both the 'faith' and 'public' sectors have struggled to understand one-another, to see things from an alternate perspective, to move beyond fear and even prejudice.
8. **But I also see many, many opportunities to break-through these misconceptions and build deep, trusted partnerships** – built around a shared commitment to do all we can to serve people living in poverty. Let me list a few that I hope this conference will explore and act on.
 - a. Shifting from generic, high-level dialogue to practical, specific, front-line oriented continuous learning. When we bring practitioners, policy makers and academics together around specific thematic issues and geographies, our experience is that practical ideas are shared and ongoing learning flows. I expect this conference to model this with 'deeper dives' into sexual & gender-based violence, and humanitarian assistance & disaster relief.
 - b. Reimagining our collective approach to building evidence on the role of faith in community development, and to communicating this evidence. Above all we need a collaborative and practical approach to building 'evidence' that both the public and faith sectors craft together. This might include: what we understand by evidence, what 'robust' looks like, how we assess the intangibles associated with behaviours and mindsets, how we create learning communities, and so on.

- c. Naming and confronting fears and prejudices, that both public and faith sectors hold of one-another. We must get to the bottom of what fuels such attitudes and confront obstacles to understanding, dialogue and action. Public sector fears may include proselytism and weak accountability mechanisms within the faith sector. Faith sector fears may include prescriptive approaches that undermine the inherent strengths of the faith sector, and exporting of 'Western' cultural norms that conflict with faith principles and teaching. We need to get open and practical.
 - d. Finding more common language and frameworks that bridge our differing contexts and perspectives. I am encouraged here, for example by the direction of this year's World Development Report on 'Mind, Society & Behaviour', and the recommendations highlighted in McKinsey's report for this conference. But there is far more to do.
 - e. Exploring and experimenting with ways to make it easier for Governments and multi-laterals to engage with typically fragmented faith networks.
 - f. Broadening the focus of the public sector to focus not simply on faith-based NGOs, faith 'assets' (such as schools and hospitals) and senior faith leaders, but also on the vast capacities that lie within local congregations, and on the role of faith at a local level in influencing behaviours - in the formation of values, social norms, behaviours, attitudes, social networks, perceptions of identity, etc.
9. **I hope and expect of this conference a decisive shift to move far beyond high-level rhetoric to practical, gritty, meaningful action that leads to lasting, fruitful collaboration across the public and faith sectors.** The vast majority people living in poverty are people of faith – rightly, I believe they are demanding this of us. The opportunities are huge. We must not let them down.

Matthew Frost

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How to work with religious scholars and leaders? How to construct authentic relationships; set dynamics and build constituencies for change?

Atallah FitzGibbon and Mohamed Abu-El-Magd

Islamic Relief

During the last two decades the Government of Egypt and several INGOs developed and implemented programs to protect the environment. These programs cover a wide range of issues, from air and water pollution to pest management and control and many more.

Several years of failure led most of the INGOs to a radical new approach. Egypt is a deeply religious Muslim society. They believed that the key to cultural change lay in influencing religious leadership. They teamed up with faith based institutions to increase the awareness of local communities about the importance of environmental protection and sustainability.

Workshops were held with scholars initially and then the community to sensitise the community to their religious responsibilities to the environment and the creation based around a set of key Qu'ranic principles and sharia instruments. The workshops were a remarkable success in bringing about grass roots change in attitudes and behavior.

In the words of a local farmer; 'We never cared about breaking the law, but we cannot break the law of God' .

In Yemen three years ago Islamic Relief implemented a conflict transformation programme to address the rise of communal and community violence. Working with scholars and CTPB specialists we integrated faith teachings and principles around the avoidance of violence and peaceful resolution to remarkable success. During the joint evaluation of the programme with DFID we discovered that Imams and Shaykhs had used these teachings to remarkable good use, with one Imam in the Muflahi District negotiating an agreement for non-violence in the continuing political dispute between southern secessionists and unionists in the district.

I could point to many other examples related to health messages, livelihoods, Hiv/Aids, gender empowerment and rights issues where IR and other agencies such as the UN have brought around positive cultural change by the use of engagement with scholarship and religious leaders.

What's important for us here is to draw out the lessons and principles of this engagement.

1. The first point is an important one. We cannot assume that a particular behaviour or cultural tradition practised by Muslims emerges from faith teaching. It may be conflicting with faith principles and it may be confused with faith teaching. Very often remote and less economically developed Muslim communities are not well educated either generally or in their religion.
2. Within a state having a secular law, there will very often be a parallel legal process operated by the Muslim community, not necessarily conflicting with the law but usually symbiotic. Obviously there is a spectrum of integration of sharia law in Muslim countries, and in sharia based legal systems such as Yemen, Iraq and many other nations engagement by NGOs with

sharia issues is even more essential. About 7 years ago Islamic Relief developed a project with legal scholars from Sana'a University and the Islamic Foundation in the UK to examine the faith references around the UDHR to support the promotion of human rights in Yemen such as issues of early marriage, denial of female inheritance rights, rights of minorities and refugees etc. Yemen itself has had a successful education programme for terrorists in prison based on faith teaching and the Ministry of Awqaf was supportive of involving material on human rights in the training of imams. So the principle emerging here is engagement with religious law and religious leaders even though secular law may be in place.

3. There is also a critical principle to understand that sharia is not fixed in stone but based around a set of principles or priorities, involving the protection of life, faith, livelihoods, the family and future generations and the intellect. A cultural practice like early marriage after puberty that was allowed a thousand years ago under a very different cultural context is not allowed within most Muslim countries today based on these principles. The difficulty exists around the level of religious education required to rule on these issues. Religious leaders at a lower level, including imams, will not normally be equipped to make these judgements and will usually not accept them unless emerging from their own school of jurisprudence. Therefore the principle here has to be engagement at a senior level with religious scholars from that school of jurisprudence in order to influence cultural change at a lower level .
4. The fourth point surrounds the level of dialogue that may be needed between the senior scholars and local imams and community leaders. Leadership has to come from within and impulses for change have to emerge from a person's own heart to be effective. Therefore engagement and dialogue on values and belief is essential and it is essential that they feel that their own tradition and religion supports this change. A famous verse of the Quran says **'You will not change a people until you change what is in their hearts'**. Culture and behaviour is dynamic and rooted in the interplay between ethics & belief, inherited culture and external influence. We can see from the Arab Spring and cultural change in the Arab world over the last 50 years how Muslim culture is continually under negotiation, with the rise of global media and the integration of European values of governance with generally a strong adherence and love of Islam being extremely important factors. However this influence has affected urbanised and educated elites more than the communities Islamic Relief commonly work with, who have usually very low levels of education and access to other media and cultures.
5. Finally, in some developing countries, the formal imams are government employees. They are expected to follow the orders of Sr. government officials and protect their images and interests. In some communities the official imams are not from the local area. All this may lead to mistrust between the local communities and the formally appointed imams. The 'independent religious leaders' of the communities may not be liked by the government officials, but they are the TRUE leaders of their communities and they have their full trust. This is a sensitive issue but Islamic Relief had lots of success partnering with the independent religious leaders.

The Scandal of Extreme Poverty

Michele F. Broemmelsiek
Catholic Relief Services

Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry.

- Pope Francis, meeting with students of Jesuit schools, June 7, 2013

Every day, millions of poor people are forced to make impossible choices – between food and medicine, between education and shelter, between a meal today and a crop next year. Extreme poverty is indeed scandalous, and all of us gathered this week at the World Bank share a commitment to ending it. To achieve our goal, we must recognize the critical role played by each actor and learn how to work together effectively.

Faith-based organizations have been a part of development and humanitarian assistance for centuries. Our vision of integral human development promotes human dignity, solidarity, social justice and change; it is holistic and people-centered. This approach isn't unique, but what sets us apart and makes us critical allies is the vast interconnectedness of our global affiliations. By tapping into our rich and long-standing relationships in communities, we strengthen societies from the bottom up—connecting family to village, community to district, and national to international systems. This is the cornerstone of our work. Working with and through us, the development community can leverage the scale, sustainability and convening role of faith actors, and move the world one step closer to eliminating extreme poverty.

- **SCALE:** By the nature of our religious affiliation, faith-based organizations connect to an active network of faith leaders, communities, and institutions around the world. For example, the Caritas Internationalis network of Catholic agencies has 165 members working in almost every country. Furthermore, the World Bank estimates that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, as much as 50% of all health and education services are provided by faith-based organizations.¹ This vast presence allows us to maximize existing systems, personnel, resources, and infrastructure to work at scale both within and across countries.
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** Faith-based organizations are not temporary implants grafted onto local communities when funds are available. We are an integral and permanent part of the community. As such, we provide the local and long-term perspective that is so crucial for success. Sustainability is more achievable when the institutions directly responsible for the development programming are themselves local.
- **ROLE AS CONVENERS AND PEACEBUILDERS:** Faith leaders have the social standing, local acceptance, goodwill and credibility to bring together government, business, labor unions and civil society to bring about large-scale and systemic change. Because of their unique position, faith leaders have an extensive track record in helping to

¹ James, Rick, What is Distinctive about FBOs?, INTRAC, Praxis Paper no. 22 (2009: 7).

create peaceful and just societies, working with the authority that springs from the trust the community holds in them.

The challenge for all of us is to find a way to bring our strengths together to end extreme poverty. There are many ways the development community can help faith actors reach their potential as full development partners. The two most important ones are to:

- **SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES:** Institutions evolve, become more vibrant, and withstand the test of time by what they learn and share. Through capacity strengthening and accompaniment, the international community can help faith-based organizations create the structures and systems that will enable them to manage larger and more complex programs.
- **CREATE AND MAINTAIN SPACE:** The international community must carve out welcoming space for all stakeholders to collaborate together. Specifically we need to encourage broad participation by faith-based organizations and civil society in the creation of national development agendas.

Our discussion this week proves that we have the interest, goodwill and opportunity to confront and eliminate extreme poverty. We have a powerful call to action – and to act now.

A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being.

- Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, June 20, 2013

Multi-religious Collaboration for Maternal and Child Health in Kenya

Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General, Religions for Peace

Overview

While there have been significant declines in maternal mortality, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the number of deaths are still well above the designated millennium development goals (MDGs). According to 2013 UNICEF statistics¹, there are approximately 510 deaths per 100,000 live births in Sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 800 women die every day due to preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth and that 99% of these deaths occur in developing countries. Some of the primary causes of these preventable deaths are lack of information and cultural practices.²

The progress towards achieving the MDGs for child survival are also lagging behind. Children in Sub-Saharan Africa are more than 15 times more likely to die before the age of five than children in developed regions and more than half of these deaths are preventable³. As with maternal mortality, many of these deaths can be prevented by behavior changes that can be promoted and taught by religious communities.

Why Multi-religious Collaboration for Advocating for Enhanced Maternal and Child Survival

The shift in antenatal, postnatal and neonatal care practices are needed for the survival and wellbeing of mothers and children in the developing world. Religious communities have the assets – social, spiritual and moral – to reach out to these people and bring about the needed change. They can –

Reach Vast Numbers of People: Faith communities are collectively the largest civil society organization, including up to 80% or more of some nation's populations. They reach the most people, including the hardest to reach. *If appropriately equipped, faith communities can be a great avenue to promote needed life-saving household practices.*

Use Existing Social Infrastructure: Religious and faith-inspired communities have a wealth of interconnected infrastructure — congregations, schools, clinics, hospitals, etc. — that reaches from a nation's capital into its remote communities. Today, they are overwhelmingly led and staffed by local nationals. *If appropriately equipped, religious infrastructure and related clerical staff, community groups and other volunteers can be harnessed to promote life-saving household practices.*

Overcome Barriers: Faith leaders are influential and trusted and hence, can help overcome the barriers to the promotion of needed life-saving household practices, shaping new social norms,

¹ UNICEF Data: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women : <http://data.unicef.org/maternal-health/maternal-mortality>. Retrieved 6/2015.

² World Health Organization Fact Sheet #348, "Maternal mortality". <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/>. Retrieved 6/2015.

³ World Health Organization Fact Sheet # 178, "Children: reducing mortality". <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs178/en/>. Retrieved 6/2015.

while also mitigating suspicions surrounding new, unfamiliar public health or development initiatives. Faith leaders also have unparalleled access into the family sphere, and it is that family unity which holds primary and utmost responsibility for the care and well-being of children.

Engage Moral Authority: The world's religions, while differing in doctrines, are increasingly uniting around a moral consensus that human life has inalienable dignity and that the well-being of children is of unique and special importance. A focus on the health of children and mothers lies at the heart of a growing moral consensus across many faith traditions. *Religious leaders can make clear that it is the duty of families and communities to provide for the health of children and their mothers. They can use their moral authority to promote the adoption of life-saving household practices.*

Faith for Life Case Study – Kenya

The Interreligious Council of Kenya (IRCK), *Religions for Peace's* national affiliate, joined with UNICEF and key Kenyan national and local authorities to develop a comprehensive communication strategy to promote maternal and child survival. Through the *Faith for Life* (F4L) Project, IRCK's religious leaders effectively improved child survival and development strategy (CSD) interventions within their community by lending moral authority and engaging their social assets.

As a part of the F4L Project, more than 14,000 religious leaders were trained, reaching over 2.8 million people in the selected regions. With more than 98% of Kenya's population identifying with a faith tradition, the religious leaders were able to have an extensive reach throughout the some of the most remote areas. This project has contributed to an increase in positive health practices and a decrease in preventable deaths. Malarial deaths are down by more than 50%, the exclusive breastfeeding campaign has yielded a 10% increase in six months exclusive breastfeeding in communities. Religious leaders have been able to stem negative beliefs surrounding healthcare, promoting trust in the healthcare system and decreasing beliefs in traditional myths by 15%.

Active partnership with the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation from the onset ensured that the F4L materials had a wider ownership and were compliant with the CSD. The early engagement with the Ministry is heralded as one of the greatest factors for success of this program. Working together, religious communities received accurate information from their trusted leaders, increasing acceptance and likelihood of behavioral change. In addition, multi-religious action also contributed to inter-faith harmony amongst the different faiths as they worked together on a common goal, thereby strengthening social cohesion and security in the region.

Recommendations to Policy Makers

- Religious communities' extensive reach and moral authority allows them to reach wide audiences and achieve significant results with small amounts of funding. Governments should provide grants to religious communities to support the implementation of nationwide health programs.
- It is imperative to engage with religious leaders early on; religious leaders can provide additional insight on their communities and co-development of strategies will yield greater results by providing expertise on the needs and challenges of the beneficiaries, and the role that the religious communities can play.

How will History Remember Us?

Taking Responsibility. Taking Action. Together

A Message by HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati to the Religion and Sustainable Development Conference, Washington DC, July 2015

63 years ago, when I was born, only 2.3 billion people lived on this fragile planet of ours. In my short lifetime, less than a blink of God's eye, the population has skyrocketed by some 5 billion more. Our world, as economist, Paul Krugman, so famously said, is growing ever-increasingly more hot, flat and crowded. The result: our water is drying up while becoming more polluted; our air, in cities such as Delhi--which is close to where I live-- is rapidly growing unbreathable; natural disasters are mounting in intensity; farms are failing and the great and historic strides achieved by the Millennium Development Goals stand to be reversed if we don't act quickly... If we don't act together.

I would say, our world is at a tipping point, perhaps the most significant humanity has ever witnessed. Because of this, a great and urgent moral responsibility rests on our shoulders. And we must ask ourselves this one important question: "how will history remember us?" Shall we band together, as an impenetrable force, to bring incredible change, or shall we serve as single, divided battalions, bringing what may be only end in divided results?

Truly, I would say, at this great crossroad of history, hope is in our hands.

Right now, the subject of water, sanitation and hygiene, or WASH, in particular is becoming an increasingly-crucial issue. Every day, some 1,800 young children worldwide die mostly-preventable deaths for the lack of healthy WASH, and I point to water as perhaps the most important key to our combined futures, for where is agriculture without it? Where are our cities, such as Sao Paolo, without it? Where can we live for more than a handful of days without it? Where is our peace without it? Said former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "it's not every day you find an issue where effective diplomacy and development will allow you to save millions of lives... Water is that issue."¹

This is why faith communities across the world are coming together through the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, or GIWA, to make sure that everyone, everywhere has access to WASH, for now and for the future. I believe we can win the war for WASH through the coming together of people from all backgrounds and all faiths, and because of this, GIWA is the world's first interfaith network that is working diligently with faith communities, NGOs, multilateral organizations, corporate leaders, politicians and others for a new revolution: a WASH revolution. For this, faith leaders are playing a central role in bringing forth messages that are crucial for change.

¹ US Department of State Report to US Congress, "Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act," 2010

Why is this? It is because our world is a world of faith. 84 percent of us across the planet belong to an organized religion... It's actually about 99% in India. And it is to faith leaders that people turn in times of joy and sorrow, calm and crisis. We are here at the World Bank, so I will borrow from behavioural economics and say that faith forms the bedrock of society, influencing how countless people eat, live, dress, marry and even vote. In other words, faith shapes the decisions we make. Faith has influenced our past. Faith will influence our future. Faith influences us as a global family.

That is why it is crucial, if we are to solve the glaring crises of our future, that faith-based organizations and leaders play a central role, in partnership with the private sector and civil society, hand-in-hand, as one.

Here are some of my recommendations for how we can come together, and stay together:

ONE: We must rise above the separation of faiths, backgrounds and castes to act as one. To do so, setting guiding principles is key: including agreeing ahead of time that we won't proselytize and we won't divide. Instead, we will share knowledge and resources... we will work in an environmentally-sustainable way, we will adhere to human rights conventions, such as the rights of the child... We will learn together, and we will work transparently, together

TWO: Let us join forces to build the capacities of faith-based organizations, so we can do more together. A little training can go a long way towards lasting change.

THREE: Consider faith organizations and leaders as essential partners in all sustainable development programmes, from the first design phases onwards. In such a way, meaningful new messages for change can be created and great and far-reaching networks for good can be sustained. For this, faith organizations should also be enabled to play more central roles in meetings where policy agendas, from the SDGs to PRSPs, are set.

FOUR: Broaden the Network: Let us map out our world's faith organizations, according to capacities, locations and contact details, so that we can find each-other, so that we can serve together, and so that we can bring about a more sustainable and peaceful world. Together.

In Conclusion

As I mentioned near the beginning of this message: right now, this very minute, and forever more, hope is in our hands. Let us not let it run through our fingers, as water does through those of a single left hand, which is weak without the support of the right. Instead, let us reach for and grasp the hands of all members of our global family, of all faiths, backgrounds, philosophies, genders and creeds, and let us together, as Mahatma Gandhi so beautifully said, "be the change we wish to see in this world."

The future begins now. The future begins together.

● ● ● WASHINGTON, DC / JULY 7-9, 2015
RELIGION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Building Partnerships to End Extreme Poverty

Building Faith Enriched Partnerships

Faith-based resources for sustainable development

Lt Colonel (Dr) Dean Pallant

The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission

Our challenge at this conference is to find ways to build robust partnerships to end extreme poverty. Saul Alinsky – the American community organising pioneer and now linked with President Obama – argued that to sustain faithful relationships and prevent their subordination to either politics or economics, moral traditions and institutions are required.¹ Salvation Army practice around the world confirms Alinsky's thesis – sustainable development needs people to have resilient, authentic relationships in all dimensions of life plus moral traditions and institutions to sustain those relationships. They prevent people being used as mere instruments of the state or commodities of the market. The world's religions and faith based organisations have a vital role in building a better world. However, the draft zero Post-2015 SDG document released on June 2nd does not mention the words 'faith', 'religion' or 'spirituality'.

I am an ordained minister of religion in The Salvation Army. We are celebrating 150 years this year and now work in 126 countries. I appreciate we are very new and very small in comparison with other faiths. However, The Salvation Army is part of the Christian church and it is from that perspective that I speak. I do not intend to make generalisations for other religions or faiths but I hope, as I speak, you will hear echoes in your tradition.

As a practical theologian I note two key insights that are vital in building partnerships for sustainable development:

1. **Motivation:** People of faith have a moral and spiritual imperative to address extreme poverty. This motivation extends well beyond Christianity as exemplified in the declaration by global faith leaders launched at the 2015 Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank. Fighting poverty and injustice is not merely a personal preference for people of faith – it is a divine demand.
2. **Theological Anthropology:** Who did God create us to be? Christianity places great value on the human person – the belief that people are made in the image of God. This appreciation of the human person and the value placed on relationships are key in the fight to end extreme poverty and increase shared prosperity.

I will not spend time on motivation – we would not be here if we were not convinced there is an urgent problem to be addressed. I wish us to reflect on the value of the human person and the need to prioritise relational capacity building from a faith perspective. For sustainable development to be achieved, people need resilient, authentic relationships in all dimensions of life.

Building deeper relationships starts with understanding ourselves – dealing with the fractures in our own personalities; resolving damaged relationships with others and building quality, resilient relationships; being good stewards of the resources at our disposal – especially our planet. And, most importantly, for people of faith deepening our relationship with God and being the people God wants us to be.

Building Deeper Relationships

All people – irrespective of race, gender or sexuality, ability or disability, age or class, educated or uneducated, healthy or sick, rich or poor, saints or criminals – are made in the image of God and are beings of intrinsic worth.

¹ Bretherton, Luke "Resurrecting Democracy – Faith, Citizenship, and the Politics of a Common Life", Cambridge University Press, 2015, p35

While resources such as the Declaration of Human Rights remind us of these eternal truths, our rights are not given by a parliament or court – they are a gift from God.

Institutional Isomorphism

This rich appreciation of people is, unfortunately, easily lost in practice. Churches and FBOs can easily slip from the standards they profess and God's desired identity. This highlights a broader point. One of the dangers of partnerships – particularly with powerful governments or wealthy donors – is that faith groups may lose their identity. The process of institutional isomorphism is real – the weaker partner adopts the characteristics of the powerful partner and loses its identity.² A partner losing its identity does not help the powerful partner nor, most importantly, in the interests of people living in extreme poverty who often share the faith.

Paul Gifford, in an ethnography of contemporary African Christianity, provides detailed analysis of the extent to which the Kenyan Church is engaged in the 'development business' but notes very few FBOs in Kenya "seem interested in even asking whether there is any specifically Christian way of or contribution to development"³. Gifford, who claims not to have a theological or denominational interest in his study, reaches a disturbing conclusion: "[The] increasing identification of mainline Christianity with Western development aid is something whose significance needs to be acknowledged. As Africa has become increasingly marginalised, excluded from globalising movements and processes, these aid flows and what they involve have become increasingly significant for, even constitutive of, parts of mainline Christianity. This is the sense in which one can talk of secularisation in Africa. It is not that Africans are notably becoming secularised, but much of mainline Christianity effectively is."⁴

Encouraging faith enriched practice

For some, the secularisation of the church and FBOs is good news. I believe it is very bad news particularly in parts of the world where extremists are hijacking religion for evil ends. This is not the time to leave a vacuum – it will be filled not by peace-loving secularists or evangelical atheists. In reality, the space is being filled by narrow minded extremists who abuse faith for their own ends. It is in the interest of governments, the UN and World Bank to partner with mature, responsible religious people and institutions and encourage faith enriched practice.

How? I mention a few tools developed in the past 5 years and being rolled out across The Salvation Army to encourage faith enriched practice – more details are on the conference web portal:

1. **Faith Based Facilitation** – a way of working that encourages reflective practice and intentionally includes the resources of the Scriptures, faith tradition and the Spirit (Kairos Experience). See www.salvationarmy.org/fbf
2. **Mission Accountability Framework** – a six dimension framework with common questions to be answered by all people engaged in Salvation Army programmes that encourage faithfulness, transparency and accountability.
3. **Unified Framework for Measurement** – an attempt to develop a tool for impact measurement which includes relational measures as well as contextual outcomes. This is still in the early stage of development.

My central argument is that sustainable development is impossible without a rich valuing of people and intentional strengthening of relational capacity. While market and state are vital in achieving sustainable development, they have a tendency to undervalue people and human relationships through processes of instrumentalisation and commodification. Faith specific habits and practices – sustained by religious institutions – have a proven track record of building trust, resilience, care and hope. These characteristics – and the faith practices that produce them – should be valued and sought after to a much greater extent by all who seek sustainable development and the end of poverty in all its dimensions.

² Pallant, Dean "Keeping Faith in Faith Based Organisations – a practical theology of Salvation Army health ministry", 2012, Wipf and Stock

³ Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, London, Hurst, 2009), p49.

⁴ Ibid, p50.