**SIDE EVENT**

***“Role of Faith in Development: Launch of the Asia Pacific Faith-Based Coalition for Sustainable Development”***

**Venue: Meeting room F, 1st floor, UNCC
Date: Wednesday, 28 March 2018
Time: 12:00 – 13:30
Organizers: World Vision International (WVI), ACT Alliance, Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), Soka Gakkai International (SGI), Arigatou International, Asia Civil Society Partnership on Sustainable Development (APSD)**

**Background**

The APFSD 2018 theme “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” is very important for the Asia Pacific Region.

The Asia Pacific region’s rich cultural and religious diversity makes it unique and resourceful. Faith plays critical role in defining and understanding relationship between individual and other faiths and institutions. In the 21st century, it is become more and more evident that transformation of communities is not possible without addressing roots causes of some of the behaviors people demonstrate in social life. Communities could be more resilient when societies have strong social, cultural and economic foundation. We also understand that behaviors are very much shaped and influenced by the faith. Religious divide is going to be one of the major development challenge that development actors need to address to eradicate extreme poverty. The role of faith leaders will be pivotal in transformation of communities due to their access to the communities and trust among the community members. People’s values and behaviors are shaped by the religious beliefs; hence, it is important to address and shape those towards a better society.

Faith based organizations are unique as they represent their faith community and are well respected and accepted within and outside their communities and, so are the faith leaders. This enables FBOs to be more effective influencers at various levels, thereby providing Faith based organizations a unique opportunity to connect effectively with communities as well as national and international fora. Historically, faith based groups have played significant role in delivery of humanitarian and development services to communities. FBOs are usually the first responders in humanitarian crisis and proven to be leading development actors that are contributing in making communities sustainable.

The Sustainable Development Goals, or Agenda 2030 has clearly mentioned [[1]](#footnote-1)role of peace and security. It says that without realizing peace and security, the development gains will be at risk. To achieve dream of sustainable development, the agenda 2030 urged governments to intensify efforts to resolve or prevent conflicts and to support post conflict countries. Faith-based organizations can play pivotal role in preventing conflicts and even, through joint projects, can achieve better results especially in communities subjected to conflict in the past.

**Scope**

The five-global faith-based organizations from different faiths i.e. World Vision, ACT Alliance, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Soka Gakkai International, Arigatou International, met in Bangkok from September 28 to 29, 2017, formed and agreed to launch the **A**sia **P**acific **F**aith-based **C**oalition (APFC) for sustainable development. The objective of this coalition is to provide greater impetus to the voices of faith communities and effectively engage in Asia pacific regional development discourse feeding to global processes, such as the SDGs.   This is an open, inclusive coalition representing different faiths towards achieving sustainable development and peace.

**Key Questions**

The key questions to be discussed in this side event are:

* What is role of faith in making communities resilient and socially cohesive to achieve sustainable development?
* How Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) can work together and address issues at the regional levels?
* What will be the complementary role FBOs to achieving sustainable development agenda in the region?
* How can various Faith Based Agencies coordinate their efforts and work with UN and Civil Society Organizations in addressing the common issues instead of working in isolation?

**Moderator**

Mr. Norbert Hsu, Regional Leader, East Asia Region, World Vision International (WVI)

**Panelists/discussants**

* John Patrick Murray | National Catholic Commission on Migration, Thailand
* Hiro Sakrai | Director of the Office for UN Affairs, Soka Gakkai International
* Masud Siddique | Head of Asia Region, Islamic Relief Worldwide
* Anselmo Lee | Senior Advisor, ADA and APSD
* Shinji Kubo | Officer – in – Charge, UNHCR Representative in Bangkok, Thailand

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| **Time** | **Topic** | **Presenters** | **Organization** |
| 12:15 – 12:20 | Introduction – MC invites Moderator to take the stage | Rajakaruna Chamindha Samantha | Arigatou International |
| 12:20 – 12:25 | Video presentation – FBOs contributions to achieve SDGs  | Norbert Hsu | World Vision International |
| 12:25 – 13:04 | **Panel Discussion** Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies – Role of faith and faith based organizations | Norbert Hsu (Moderator)   |  |
| 13:05 – 13:10 | Introduction to the Coalition and objectives and mapping of FBOs activities related to SDGs | Anoop Sukumaran and Sudarshan Reddy | ACT Alliance &WVI  |
| 13:10 – 13:20 | Q&A |  |  |
| 13:20 – 13:25 | Video Messages of Faith Leaders | Norbert Hsu |  |
| 13:25 – 13:30 | Closing and thanks giving | Rajakaruna Chamindha Samantha  | Arigatou International  |

**For more details and information contact:**

Abid Gulzar, Director Advocacy and Justice for Children, World Vision International, (abid\_gulzar@wvi.org)

Sudarshan Reddy Kodooru, Director, Faith & Development, World Vision International (sudarshan\_reddy@wvi.org) on behalf of the Asia Pacific Faith based Coalition for Sustainable Development

1. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Article 35) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)