

## Synthesis of the session on *People and Planet*

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**The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the 5 Ps - People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership - are central to each and every faith and to the survival of humanity.**

Human beings and the Natural World are on a two-collision course.

More than 50% of the soil of the earth is degraded due to human activity, due to urbanization and deforestation, but soil is the material and spiritual resource from which our food-security depends if not human life and human livelihoods.

Health is being compromised by the combustion of fossil-fuels that we can do without and by rapid uncontrolled urbanization that risks locking out people from access to social services, from jobs that they need.

You cannot talk about environmental degradation without touching on economy; you cannot talk about economy without talking about values: we have to rethink the idea of pursuing endless growth and the idea that conquest is progress (as said by Vandana Shiva).

If we humans continue to consume, pollute, build beyond the limits of the earth, our common home, our only home will lead to our undoing and in many ways it already does with ecosystems that are collapsing, with poverty that is the most persisting disgrace of humanity and with inequality that is rising and not slowing down.

**The world needs new inspirations**, to see growth in a new way based on spirituality: interfaith and interreligious dialogue can converge on the care of our common home. Religious groups can mobilize communities and address environmental issues, degradation and inequality. Religious communities have capillaries across the world in local realities where other people dare to go.

We can only achieve the desired result and truly *leave no one behind* if we support not those that represent the main stream but those that are in the margins. "Leave no one behind" has a real meaning, we have promised it to the poorest ones in September 2015. Unless we change the logic of wealth accumulation into an ethic paradigm of caring and sharing for our common home and for each other, what we will deliver is nothing but broken dreams.

**Urgency:** we have literally just one decade left to avoid catastrophic climate change. It is clear that we have to reduce emissions by 45% in the next 10 years and instead the emissions are rising. In the next 10 years what I, you and our faith-communities will do, will determine planetary stability and human survival for the next 10.000 years! The world-wide youth climate strike is a demonstration of our collective failure. As one young student said: "I will start to do my homework, when you do yours". Let's start to do some homework! It will be a tough battle, but the far and away best prize that life can give us is the chance to work really hard at work worth doing.

The **history of change** demonstrates us that it is small groups of thoughtful and committed people that make change happen: today we need to change our economic and political structure.

**Faith communities represent 80% of people on the earth.** We have 4000 days left, we have **to stop talking and start acting**; we have to convert moral and religious leadership in leadership by examples, what are we religious communities going to do more, better and in a different way tomorrow than we did today? The way we eat? The way we travel? The way we farm? The way we teach? What do we as individuals commit to do in order to spark hope in humanity?

We need **to start a movement that matters and is inspired by faith, but that ensures tangible, concrete action for change.** From a scientific perspective, we can still do this, we can still avoid catastrophic change.

We have to leave the International Conference on “Religions and SDGs” not just with an agenda of hope, of inspiration but with an agenda of action. “The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aims to high and falling short, but rather is setting our aim to low and in achieving our mark” (quoting from Michelangelo). Raise ambition and be concrete! Raise hope and practice solidarity!.