

## **COP28 Presidency receives ‘Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28’ at Global Faith Leaders’ Summit**



**Rola AIGHoul, *Emirates News Agency*, Abu Dhabi, 7 November 2023**

Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 President Dr. Sultan Al Jaber addressed the Global Faith Leaders’ Summit in Abu Dhabi, received the Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement on climate change from faith leaders and promised to carry their message forward to the world at COP28.

The Faith Leaders’ Summit took place under the patronage of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The event was attended by Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence; His Eminence Professor Mohamed Al Duwani Deputy of Al Azhar Al Sharif representing His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al Azhar Ahmed Al Tayed, and His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, representing His Holiness Pope Francis.

Religious leaders, academics and environmental experts participated and António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, gave a video address.

The Global Faith Leaders’ Summit brought together 28 faith leaders to sign the ‘Confluence of Conscience: Uniting for Planetary Resurgence’ known as ‘The Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28’, committing to addressing climate change and raising climate ambitions ahead of COP28, which will be held in Dubai at the end of November.

‘The Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28’ came after months of collaboration and was signed at the event, which was organised by the Muslim Council of Elders (MCE) in collaboration with the COP28 Presidency, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UAE Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence.

In his address, Dr. Al Jaber called the document “a powerful statement of intent that the whole world needs to hear.” It was, he said, “a statement of urgency, unity, solidarity, responsibility and hope.”

Addressing diverse faith leaders, Dr. Al Jaber said, “You combine all faiths around a single message of our shared humanity. You are the custodians of the beliefs and aspirations of the vast majority of everyone living on the planet, and you are a powerful voice for many communities that are not heard. Your collective faiths continue to inspire all people to live in harmony with nature and to act to protect our fragile world.”

Dr. Al Jaber added, “You have brought together diverse faiths around a common goal, and have shown that in a divided world, we can unite around climate action.”

The Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement “demands transformative action to keep 1.5°C within reach and serve affected and vulnerable communities.”

The signatories acknowledged that as “representatives of diverse faith and indigenous traditions” they were meeting to express “shared concern for the escalating climate impacts that imperil our cherished planet, as well as our common commitment to jointly address the global crisis.”

The Faith Leaders’ Summit came two days after an “extraordinary meeting” in Abu Dhabi around the establishment of a Loss and Damage Fund, which will help vulnerable people recover from climate disasters.

“I am pleased to report that we are one step closer to delivering a fully operational fund,” Dr. Al Jaber said, “Parties came together in unity and solidarity to show multilateralism can still work for everyone, especially the most vulnerable.”

Dr. Al Jaber said that COP28 was “a moment of truth for the world to align around ambitious negotiated outcomes for every nation, every faith, every community, every family and every single person living on this planet.”

Dr. Sultan called for faith leaders to help him, “send a message of tolerance, peace, optimism and prosperity from the UAE to the world.”

The COP28 Presidency has developed a four-point Action Plan to keep 1.5°C within reach and ensure nobody is left behind. These four-points are fast-tracking a just and orderly energy transition, fixing climate finance, focusing on people, nature, lives and livelihoods, and underpinning everything with full inclusivity.

Speaking on inclusivity, Dr. Al Jaber said, “Inclusivity will be the defining hallmark of COP28, because we in the UAE know that progress is powered by partnership, and that success is secured through solidarity. That is why I am so grateful for today’s declaration.”

The focus on inclusion was central to the Statement which called on “inclusive dialogue, during and beyond COPs, with faith leaders, vulnerable groups, youth, women’s organizations, and the scientific community to forge alliances that strengthen sustainable development.”

A Changemakers Majlis, titled ‘Faith and Science: Actioning an Ethic of Care for the Environment’ was also held during the summit and united faith leaders, scientists, and decision-makers to foster knowledge sharing and trust-building for a more secure and sustainable world.

Majlis, which is an Arabic term that means sitting room, or a place where people come together to discuss shared interests, serves an important role both in the home and for business meetings in the UAE and the Arab world.

In his role as COP28 President Dr. Al Jaber met with Pope Francis in October and discussed the role faith communities can play in addressing climate change.

During COP28 the Presidency will co-host the Faith Pavilion, with MCE and UNEP, marking the first-ever pavilion of its kind at a COP event. The Pavilion will be dedicated to the engagement of faith communities and will showcase 'the Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28'.

The Faith Pavilion will host panels with religious leaders, scientists, and political leaders, as well as encourage intergenerational dialogue involving young faith leaders and indigenous representatives.

**The Statement was signed by the following:**

1. His Eminence Professor Mohamed Al-Duwaini, Deputy of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, representing His Eminence the Grand Imam Of Al-Azhar Ahmed Al-Tayeb
2. His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, representing His Holiness Pope Francis
3. His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew The First, Ecumenical Patriarch Of Constantinople
4. Maulen Ashimbayev, Head of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions
5. Dharma Master Hsin Tao, Founder of the Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society
6. The Most Venerable Doctor Shinkai Kori, Chief High Priest Of Nenbutsushu Sampozen Muryojuji Temple
7. Father Grigoriy Matrusov, representing His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia
8. Bhai Sahib Doctor Satpal Singh Khalsa, Head of the Religious and Spiritual Authority for the Sikh Religion in the Western Hemisphere
9. His Holiness Mahabrahmrishi Shree Kumar Swami Jee, President of the World Humanity Parliament
10. Swami Amritaswarupananda, Head Disciple of Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi
11. Acharya Lokesh Muni, Founder of the Vishwa Shanti Kendra
12. His Virtue Sheikh-Ul Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh, Grand Mufti of the Caucasus
13. Sister Maureen Goodman, Director of Brahma Kumaris in the United Kingdom
14. General Bishop Anba Ermia, President Of The Coptic Orthodox Cultural Center

15. His Eminence Sheikh Rishama Sattar Jabar Hilo, Head of the Mandeans-Sabeans in Iraq and the World
16. Archbishop Julio Murry of the Anglican Church Of Central America, representing the Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury
17. Husain Burhanuddin, representing His Holiness Syedna Muffadal Saiffuddin, Sultan of the Bohra Community
18. His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem The Second, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East
19. Reverend Jerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches
20. Doctor Mohamed Cholil Nafis, President of the Indonesian Ulema Council
21. Rabbi Moshe Lewin, Vice President of the Conference Of European Rabbis
22. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community
23. Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia, Leader of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha
24. Chief Rabbi David Rosen, International President of Religions For Peace
25. Dr. Salem Bin Mohammed Al Malik, Director General Of The Islamic World Educational, Scientific, And Cultural Organisation
26. Bishop Thomas Schirmacher, Secretary-General of the World Evangelical Alliance
27. Debra Boudreaux, CEO of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
28. Tokita Hozumi representing Rev. Kōō Okada Spiritual Guide of Sukyo Mahikari