



PRESENT

**INTERFAITH HARMONY:
IMPLEMENTING THE TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA OF THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

HONORING THE

**2016 WORLD INTERFAITH
HARMONY WEEK**

Wednesday, 3 February 2016 • 3:00-6:00 p.m.
United Nations Conference Room 1

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The World Peace Prayer Society • United Religions Initiative • Universal Peace Federation • Interfaith Center of New York
The Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns-NY • Parliament of the World's Religions • We, The World

PROGRAMME

Musical Presentation: Kinan Azmeh, Clarinet

Ceremonial Presentation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by Religious and Faith Representatives

Opening Remarks:

H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, *High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations*

Panel 1:

Interfaith Harmony as a Key to Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

Musical Presentation: Sri Chinmoy – The Peace Meditation at the United Nations

Panel 2:

The Future of Cooperation Between Religious Communities and the United Nations

Summary Remarks:

Rev. Liberato Bautista, *President, Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations*

Closing:

H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, *High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations*

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS

H.E. MR. NASSIR ABDULAZIZ AL-NASSER, UN HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS



On March 1st, 2013, H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser assumed the post of UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Prior to that, Mr. Al-Nasser served as President of the Sixty-Sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly from September 13, 2011 to September 17, 2012. A veteran diplomat, Mr. Al-Nasser has the rank of Minister, granted by His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar. He has contributed to advancing the multilateral agenda in the realms of peace and security, sustainable development and South-South cooperation over a career spanning nearly four decades. From 1998 to 2011, Mr. Al-Nasser served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations. Mr. Al-Nasser represented his country on the United Nations Security Council during the two-year term of Qatar as a non-permanent member (2006 to 2007). He is the recipient of numerous decorations and awards, including the United Nations Association of New York Humanitarian Award in 2012. www.unaoc.org

BABA WÁNDÉ ABÍMBÓLÁ, PRESIDENT, IFA HERITAGE INSTITUTE, OYO, NIGERIA



Wándé Abímbólá is President and Founder of Ifa Heritage Institute. Deeply rooted in Yoruba oral tradition or Ifa, he received his Ph.D. in Yoruba Literature in 1970 from the University of Lagos. From 2003-2005 he was Special Adviser on Cultural Affairs and Traditional Matters to the President of Nigeria. He was installed as Spokesperson of Ifa in the Whole World in 1981 by the Ooni (King) of Ife on the recommendation of a conclave of West African Babalawos (high priests). The author of many books, he has taught at a number of leading universities in Nigeria and the USA. He has also served as Professor of Religion, Boston University, MA, 1998-2003; Senate Majority Leader, Nigeria, 1992-1993; Scholar-in-Residence, Amherst College, MA, 1990-1991; and Vice-Chancellor, University of Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), 1982-1989. www.ifaheritage.org

REV. LIBERATO “LEVI” C. BAUTISTA, PRESIDENT, COMMITTEE OF RELIGIOUS NGOS AT THE UNITED NATIONS



Liberato “Levi” C. Bautista is the Assistant General Secretary for United Nations and International Affairs of the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church. He has been in this position for close to 19 years now. Bautista serves as Main Representative to the United Nations worldwide. Bautista is currently the President of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN. He is the immediate past president of CoNGO—the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the UN. Levi comes from the Philippines. He has traveled extensively in the last 33 years to 73 countries giving lectures, teaching and attending conferences. He has written essays in journals, written and edited books, most recently “The Intersections of Migration, Human Rights and Development Justice” (2014) and “Meditations and Devotions on the Millennium Development Goals” (2011). Levi graduated from the University of the Philippines with a degree in history and political science and did his doctoral studies in Christian social and political ethics at Drew University in Madison, NJ. <http://umc-gbcs.org>

REV. DIONNE P. BOISSIÈRE, CHAPLAIN OF THE CHURCH CENTER FOR THE U.N.



Rev. Boissière is the first woman of African Descent to hold this significant position in the history of this New York ecumenical and inter-faith landmark. CCUN exists to expand the ecumenical community’s capacity and access to the United Nations in order to bring greater voice to the broad moral and ethical concerns of the church in international affairs, peacemaking and global advocacy. Owned and operated by United Methodist Women, it is the home to over 50 denominational offices, religious and secular non-governmental organizations commissioned to liaison with U.N. officials and governmental delegates. As the chief steward of the CCUN, Rev. Boissière, ensures that the Church Center provides sacred space, worship, hospitality, community services and a forum for partners and civil society to engage in transformative education that seeks to empower and build the things that make for peace.

AMB. UFUK GOKCEN, PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION TO THE U.N.



Ambassador Ufuk Gokcen, born in Istanbul, Turkey, is the Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to the United Nations since 2010. He was posted at the Turkish Embassies in Riyadh, Muscat and Damascus, and at the European and Middle East Departments of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara. At the OIC General Secretariat, he promoted engagement with international partners in the fields of mediation, conflict resolution, socio-economic development, human rights and good governance. He helped establish the partnership of the OIC with the Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat and acts as the OIC focal point with the U.S. State Department. He is a strong advocate of the promotion of the role of women in governance, development, peace making and science and technology. He promotes the OIC’s interactions with UN agencies and civil society in areas of religious peacemaking and promotion of tolerance and respect.

TAJELDIN HAMAD, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION (UPF)



Tajeldin Hamad is Secretary General of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), as well as of the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO). Among previous posts he has held are Secretary of the Executive Committee of DPI-NGOs at the United Nations, Executive Director for Interdenominational Christians for Unity and Social Action, and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of World Summit of Muslim Leaders in Jakarta and London. Mr. Hamad also serves as Chair of the Middle East Alliance for World Peace and Vice Chairman of the Global Forum on Human Settlements. He has travelled to over 80 countries, organizing and speaking at seminars, conferences, and meetings related to family, youth, women, education and interfaith dialogue. His book, *Culture of Responsibility and the Role of NGOs*, was published by Paragon House.

DR. AZZA KARAM, SENIOR ADVISOR ON CULTURE, UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)



Dr. Azza Karam serves as the Senior Advisor on Culture at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), where she coordinates Fund-wide outreach with faith-based partners and chairs the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on FBO partners on the MDGs and development. Before she joined UNFPA, she was the Senior Policy Research Advisor at the United Nations Development Program in the Regional Bureau for Arab States. Karam also worked as Special Advisor on Middle East and Islamic Affairs and Director of the Women's Programmes at the World Conference of Religions for Peace and as a Senior Program Officer at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. She has served as Lecturer at the University of Amsterdam and as the Programme Manager at the Centre for the Study of Ethnic Conflict at the Queens University of Belfast. Karam also served as consultant to international organizations in the Arab region, Central Asia, and Europe.

THE REV. VICTOR H. KAZANJIAN, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE



The Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr. is the Executive Director of the United Religions Initiative, the world's largest grassroots interfaith peacebuilding organization, based in San Francisco and working in 94 countries. Victor served as the dean of Intercultural Education and Religious and Spiritual Life, co-director of the Peace and Justice Studies Program, and director of the Peace Studies Program in India at Wellesley College, in Wellesley, Massachusetts. He is the co-founder of Education as Transformation Inc., an international organization that works on religious diversity in higher education. Victor is a visiting faculty member and Fulbright Scholar at the Malaviya Center for Peace Research at Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India. Victor is an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church and was trained as a community organizer addressing the systemic causes of poverty and injustice. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is a graduate of Harvard University. www.uri.org

SADYIA KHALIQUE, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, NY CHAPTER OF COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS



Sadyia Khalique is the Director of Operations at the New York Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-NY), a chapter of America's largest Muslim civil rights organization. At CAIR-NY, she helps victims of religious discrimination, runs an Anti-Bullying Youth campaign, and combats Islamophobia on a daily basis. She advocates for Muslim civil rights in the media and has been featured on CNN, Huffington Post, BBC News, and The New York Times. Sadyia is also active in interfaith climate justice work and did campaigns & programs with the People's Climate March, Green Faith, and Religious For Peace International. She previously worked for the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development and the YMCA. Sadyia is a New York native and a photographer who graduated from Baruch College and was a fellow at NYU Wagner's Fellowship for Emerging Leaders in Public Service.

FATHER ROGER LANDRY, ATTACHÉ, THE PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE U.N.



Father Roger Landry, a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts (USA), is attaché at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the U.N. Prior to his service for the Holy See, he served for 15 years as a parish priest, diocesan newspaper editor, and chaplain for high school students. A graduate of Harvard College and Rome's Gregorian University, he has taught widely on the thought of Popes Francis, Benedict and John Paul II, writes for various Catholic publications, and regularly appears on Catholic television and radio programs.

DR. HANIFA D. MEZOU, SENIOR ADVISOR, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND CIVIL SOCIETY, U.N. ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS (UNAOC)



Hanifa Mezoui, PhD, has enjoyed a distinguished career with the United Nations for the past 28 years. In the last ten of those years, she has been Chief of the NGO Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The Informal Regional NGO network (UN-NGO-IRENE) was developed under her guidance as a critical channel for communicating key themes and programs between the UN and the NGO community, including marginalized groups in developing countries. Since March 2009, she has been designated as the Permanent Representative to the United Nations and ECOSOC of the "International Association of the Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions" (AICESIS), IGO in Observer status with ECOSOC. From 2011 to 2012 she joined the Office of the President of the 66th General Assembly as the Special Coordinator for the Third Committee and Civil Society.

SR. ÁINE O'CONNOR, MERCY GLOBAL ACTION COORDINATOR AT THE UN FOR THE SISTERS OF MERCY, MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Sr. Áine O'Connor, RSM, Ph.D., is a member of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. She is the Mercy Global Action Coordinator at the United Nations for the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy International Association. Sr. Áine is the convener of the NGO Mining Working Group (MWG), a coalition of NGOs that advocates at and through the United Nations for human and environmental rights as related to extractive industries and promotes a rights based approach to sustainable development. The MWG and allies successfully advocated for the explicit naming of the human right to water and sanitation in the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sr. Áine obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Clinical Speech and Language Studies from Trinity College Dublin, in Ireland. She was awarded her Doctorate in Philosophy (Clinical Speech and Language Studies) from Trinity College Dublin in 1997.

SWAMI PARAMESHANANDA, BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA



Swami Parameshananda is a monk of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, a Hindu not-for-profit social and religious monastic order with headquarters in Kolkata, India. Swamiji is the organization's main United Nations Representative. He is an executive member of CSVGC-NY (Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns-NY) and the Religious NGO Committee at the United Nations. Swami Parameshananda has participated in programs on Conflict Resolution in Syria and Lebanon, as well as religious and spiritual harmony in Italy, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia. He was instrumental in establishing ashrams in Nepal, India, and Guyana to order to provide basic needs to the poor and the less fortunate. Swamiji also headed tsunami relief in South India for his organization, building or reconstructing more than 200 houses. www.bharatsevashramsangha.org

MASAMI SAIONJI, CHAIRPERSON, BYAKKO SHINKO KAI, THE WORLD PEACE PRAYER SOCIETY AND THE GOI PEACE FOUNDATION



A native of Japan and a descendant of the Royal Ryukyu Family of Okinawa, Mrs. Masami Saionji continues the movement for world peace through the universal prayer *May Peace Prevail on Earth* begun by her adoptive father, Masahisa Goi. As a spiritual leader, she has touched thousands of lives and has led peace ceremonies in many countries and at the United Nations. Her more than twenty books include *The Golden Key to Happiness*, *The Earth Healer's Handbook*, and *Vision for the 21st Century*. She is an honorary member of the Club of Budapest and a member of the World Wisdom Council. She, her husband Hiroo, and Dr. Ervin Laszlo are the initiators of the Fuji Declaration, launched in May 2015. www.fujideclaration.org

LILACH SHAFIR, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND JEWISH ENGAGEMENT, AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE



Lilach Shafir is the Director of International Education and Jewish Engagement at AJWS, where she is responsible for overseeing the creation and implementation of the Global Justice Fellowship which engages top tier leaders in the American Jewish community to use their moral authority to advocate on behalf of AJWS human rights issues. Lilach has spent more than five years living overseas, including three consecutive years in East Timor as a leadership trainer and one year in Israel. Lilach holds a master's in international education from Stanford and a bachelor's in international studies and Latin America. Lilach is an advanced speaker of Spanish, Portuguese, Tetun and Hebrew.



REV. ADAM RUSSELL TAYLOR, LEAD, FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE AT THE WORLD BANK GROUP

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor currently leads the Faith Initiative at the World Bank Group, which seeks to strengthen engagement and partnerships with faith-based organizations and religious communities in order to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity. Taylor formerly served as a Vice President at World Vision U.S., where he led the organization's policy, advocacy and campaigns to combat injustice facing children. Taylor served as a White House Fellow in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs and Public Engagement. He was formerly the Senior Political Director at Sojourners. He has also served as the Executive Director of Global Justice, an organization that educated and mobilized students around global human rights and economic justice. Taylor is a graduate of Emory University, the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology. Taylor is an ordained in the American Baptist church and the proud father of his sons Joshua and Nathaniel.

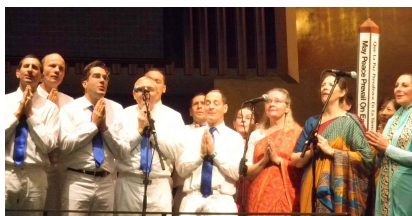
GUEST ARTISTS

KINAN AZMEH, CLARINETIST, COMPOSER



Hailed as a "virtuoso" and "Intensely soulful" by the New York Times, his utterly distinctive sound across different musical genres is now fast gaining international recognition. Kinan Azmeh, born in Damascus, Syria, was the first Arab to win the premier prize at the 1997 Nicolai Rubinstein International Competition, Moscow. A graduate of New York's Juilliard School and the Damascus High Institute of Music, Kinan earned his doctorate degree in music from the City University of New York in 2013. Kinan has appeared worldwide as a soloist, composer and improviser in venues such as Opera Bastille, Paris; Tchaikovsky Grand Hall, Moscow; Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the UN General Assembly, New York; the Royal Albert Hall, London; the Library of Congress, the Kennedy Center, Washington DC; the Mozarteum, Salzburg and the Damascus opera house for its opening concert in his native Syria. He is a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble. www.kinanzmeh.com

SRI CHINMOY: THE PEACE MEDITATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS



Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations has performed for many years at the UN, and other venues around the world, songs composed by Sri Chinmoy. In 1970, then Secretary-General U Thant invited the spiritual leader to conduct twice-weekly non-denominational peace meditations for delegates and staff at UN Headquarters in New York. Until his passing in 2007, Sri Chinmoy brought his multifaceted inspiration to the United Nations family through meditations, lectures, concerts, art exhibits and special programmes, and the Singers are honoured to continue in this spirit.

SPECIAL THANKS

Hanifa Mezoui, Senior Advisor, Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Society, U.N. Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

Program Coordination: Tajeldin Hamad, Deborah Moldow, Kusumita Pedersen, Monica Willard

Ceremony: Liberato Bautista, Dionne Boissiere, Swami Parameshananda

Volunteer Coordinator: Roger Ross

Flyer Design: Cathy Towle

PowerPoint for SDGs Ceremony: Caroline Wells and Kyra Waring