

Leadership Dialogue Looking Back: 50 years of UNEP

Friday, March 4th 2022, UN Nairobi

Statement by Archbishop Dr Thomas Schirmmacher

Thank you, excellencies and distinguished colleagues, for the opportunity to contribute a perspective from faith communities and religious traditions. Your willingness to invite a representative of a major global faith group to participate in this Leadership Dialogue is an important message in itself. Historically, UNEP has been a pioneer amongst UN organizations and entities in recognizing that faith, values and ethics cannot be ignored when we are exploring causes of and seeking solutions to the pressing crises of our times.

UNEP's Faith for Earth Initiative is a success story. For members of Faith for Earth, it has grown far beyond an "initiative." Faith for Earth is a confession by many communities of faith that having faith means you ARE for the Earth. Faith for Earth embodies a realization by the United Nations that we need faith, faith communities and faith traditions to effectively tackle the pressing issues besetting our shared Earth. Moreover, Faith for Earth expresses a mutual commitment by faith groups and the UN to communicate and collaborate.

Although I have not personally been commissioned to represent all the six billion people in the world for whom spiritual values play an important role, I know the vast majority of them would agree with me that UNEP's leadership deserves our deep gratitude for closing the ranks with faith communities in the best interest of our common home. Looking back, one can only applaud UNEP for its remarkable journey with faith communities. May the successes of the past inform our path for the future.

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