

# **THE ROLE OF RELIGIONS IN COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE**

## ***A Values-Based Vision***

(Based on Paragraph 22 of the "Astana Peace Declaration 2025")

**Astana, 2026**

## PREAMBLE

*We, the religious leaders of the world's religions and traditional faiths,*

**Guided** by the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations (UN), as well as by the international community's commitment to sustainable development, peace, justice, and harmony between humanity and nature,

**Acting in accordance with** paragraph 22 of the “**Astana Declaration of Peace 2025**”, adopted at the VIII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which instructs the Secretariat to identify the role of religion in addressing the challenges posed by climate change,

**Emphasizing** the key role of youth in building bridges of understanding and mutual respect among different cultures and religions, in accordance with paragraph 19 of the “**Astana Declaration of Peace 2025**,” and expressing support for the Forum of Young Religious Leaders within the framework of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions as an important platform for bringing together the efforts of younger generations in addressing systemic challenges related to climate change,

**Expressing concern** over the erosion of spiritual and moral values in contemporary societies, as highlighted in paragraph 11 of the “**Astana Declaration of Peace 2025**”,

**Noting**, that humanity has entered an era of unprecedented climate change, manifested in rising global temperatures, the melting of glaciers and polar ice, sea-level rise, the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and air and water pollution, which undermine food security, threaten human health, contribute to heightened tensions and conflicts over access to natural resources, and jeopardize the traditional ways of life and cultural heritage of peoples,

**Recognizing** that the contemporary environmental crisis is global, transboundary and civilizational in nature, and that it undermines the foundations of sustainable development, international security, human rights, and the integrity of the living world,

**Recognizing** that the environmental crisis has not only economic and political, but also moral, cultural and spiritual dimensions, reflecting a spiritual crisis manifested in the loss of a sense of moderation and responsibility towards nature,

**Taking into account** that the world's religious and spiritual traditions possess significant moral authority and are capable of shaping values that promote a responsible relationship with nature,

**Affirming** that key documents and official statements of the world's religious traditions, including the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the apostolic exhortation *Laudate*

*Deum*, the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, the Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change, documents of the Orthodox Churches on responsibility for Creation, the statement of the World Council of Churches, declarations of Hindu, Bahá'í and other traditions, as well as activities undertaken within the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme's *Faith for Earth* initiative, including the document *Faith for Earth: A Call for Action*, constitute an important moral and ethical foundation that complements international legal mechanisms aimed at addressing climate change and protecting the environment,

**Proceeding from the conviction** that, according to the teachings of the world's religions and traditional faiths, humanity is called upon to live in harmony with the Earth, preserve the vital balance of nature, and recognize itself as part of the continuous chain of existence,

**Drawing upon** the "Golden Rule" as a universal moral principle found across the majority of religious traditions,

**Recognizing** that the world's religious traditions, while guided by their distinct teachings and spiritual approaches, converge in affirming a shared moral responsibility to uphold ecological integrity, expressed, inter alia, through the Islamic principles of *Al-Mizan* (Balance) and *Amanah* (Trust), which regard human beings as *Khalifa* (Stewards) entrusted with preserving the balance of the Earth; the Catholic teaching on "ecological sin" and the call to care for Creation as the common home of humanity; the Jewish commandment to "till and keep" the Earth and the principle of *Bal Tashchit* ("Do not destroy"); the Buddhist understanding of *Pratītyasamutpāda* (Dependent Origination) as a foundation for the harmonious coexistence of all forms of life; the Hindu teaching of *Dharma* as the duty to uphold the cosmic order of *Rita*; the Shinto reverence for nature; the Taoist pursuit of harmony with the *Tao*; as well as the principle of the *oneness of being* in the Bahá'í Faith,

**Recognizing** that humanity is an integral part of the living world, and that the relationship between human beings and nature is grounded in interdependence, coexistence, and respect for the integrity of life, whereby the well-being of present and future generations depends on humanity's ability to live within the limits of ecosystem sustainability,

**Drawing upon** the concept of *Amanat*, enshrined in Kazakh cultural and ethical heritage as a principle of careful and responsible stewardship of that which is entrusted from one generation to the next,

**Expressing concern** that development models based on unlimited consumption, short-term gain, and the exploitation of natural resources contribute to the systemic disruption of ecological balance and the depletion of the natural foundations of life,

**Recognizing** that true sustainability requires synergy between the restoration and preservation of natural processes, ensuring that human endeavour respects the fragile balance of the living world,

**Recognizing** the climate crisis as a fundamental challenge to human solidarity, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable groups, including people living in poverty, women, children, and Indigenous peoples,

**Referring to** the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement as the fundamental international legal instruments governing global efforts to address climate change,

**Emphasizing** the international community's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030,

**Recognizing** that armed conflicts and human-induced disasters cause profound and often irreversible damage to natural ecosystems,

**Taking into account** the development of the international legal framework for environmental protection, as well as ongoing discussions within the United Nations system aimed at preventing large-scale and long-term harm to the environment and developing appropriate measures to address such harm,

**Noting** the growing engagement of religious communities in the international climate agenda, including their participation in the *Talanoa Dialogue* under the *Interfaith Liaison Committee*, in the *Faith Pavilion* at the sessions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as in parallel summits of religious leaders at the regional and international levels,

**Proceeding from the understanding** that the objective of our collective efforts is to safeguard the integrity and continuity of all life, and that human well-being is inseparable from the health of the Earth,

**Affirming** that this document is advisory in nature, creates no obligations, and is intended to serve as a moral and values-based framework for religious communities, States, international organizations, and all people of goodwill,

**We present the document entitled “The Role of Religion in Combating Climate Change,”** which sets forth agreed provisions reflecting the shared positions of the world's religions and traditional faiths on combating climate change and respect for nature and the environment.

These provisions were developed through consultations with members of the Secretariat's Working Group of the Congress, taking into account religious teachings and official documents of religious communities.

## **1. The Intrinsic Value and Integrity of the Living World**

The religious traditions of the world converge in recognizing the intrinsic value and integrity of the living world, regardless of its utility to human beings.

Each religious tradition understands nature in its own way, recognizing that its significance extends beyond its material value: as Creation entrusted to human stewardship and possessing inherent dignity; as a manifestation of a sacred order of the world; or as a living whole encompassing all forms of life.

Recognizing the intrinsic value of life entails a moral responsibility to treat the environment with care and to preserve the integrity of natural systems.

## **2. Intergenerational Continuity (Amanat)**

Humanity is a conscious participant in the natural world and bears a responsibility to future generations to preserve the planet's vital life-support systems.

Each generation constitutes a link in the unbroken chain of life connecting the past, present, and future, and the condition of the Earth that the present generation leaves behind will determine the living conditions of those who follow.

## **3. The Ethics of Moderation and Balance**

In many religious traditions, an ecologically sustainable culture is grounded in the principles of mindful consumption and the pursuit of balance and proportionality in humanity's relationship with nature.

This value orientation is expressed through various spiritual teachings, including the pursuit of voluntary moderation; an attitude of respect and gratitude towards nature; the maintenance of balance in humanity's interaction with the natural world; and the avoidance of unjustified harm to living beings.

Despite the diversity of approaches, religious traditions are united in their rejection of the exploitative use of nature and their shared commitment to restoring and replenishing what humanity takes from the natural world.

## **4. Solidarity with the Most Vulnerable**

The impacts of climate change generate transboundary risks and vulnerabilities affecting all societies. However, these impacts are felt most acutely by groups with the fewest resources for adaptation, including people living in poverty, Indigenous and traditional communities whose livelihoods are closely connected to the condition of their ancestral lands, as well as regions that systematically experience climate instability.

**Based on the foregoing considerations,**

**WE DECLARE AND CALL FOR:**

1. **Affirm** that the preservation of the living world is a common and moral obligation of all humanity, rooted in our shared responsibility for the continuity of life on Earth.
2. **Affirm** that environmental degradation undermines the natural resilience of our ecosystems and threatens the vital resources upon which all life depends, recognizing that the depletion of the Earth's natural systems exacerbates shared vulnerabilities that transcend national borders.
3. **Declare** that addressing climate change is an integral part of strengthening peace, respecting human dignity, and ensuring sustainable development.
4. **Express** our deep commitment to preserving the natural environment as an essential condition for the well-being of present and future generations and the flourishing of all life.
5. **Emphasize** that the decisions made by the present generation will shape the legacy passed on to future generations.
6. **Recognize** our shared ethical responsibility towards future generations and regard this responsibility as a foundation for shaping a global response to the challenges posed by climate change.
7. **Recognize** that the environmental crisis requires not only technological solutions, but also a profound reassessment of values and ways of life, as well as a transition from a culture of exploitation to a culture of mindful moderation.
8. **Present** to the international community the concept of Amanat, rooted in Kazakh cultural heritage and consonant with the teachings of our traditions concerning the unbroken bond between generations, as a values-based framework for intergenerational responsibility in the global climate dialogue.
9. **Recognize** the richness and diversity of religious teachings, affirming the broad solidarity of the world's religious traditions in condemning the large-scale and irreversible destruction of the living world.
10. **Affirm** that this ethical call is essential to ensuring the conscious observance of environmental principles at the individual and community levels through the cultivation of personal awareness and a culture of responsible consumption.

11. **Emphasize** the key role of spiritual leaders, whose unique moral authority is rooted in centuries-old spiritual traditions, in shaping values that strengthen believers' personal commitment to environmentally responsible ways of life.

12. **Note** that spiritual unity and interfaith cooperation, grounded in respect for human dignity and the sacred value of life, strengthen trust among cultures and peoples and can serve as a source of hope and transformation in the face of global climate challenges.

13. **Call upon** religious communities to translate their spiritual values into responsible and active leadership, drawing on mechanisms of community solidarity, including the ecological transformation of sacred sites, the reduction of their overall environmental impact, the strengthening of the role of children and youth in advancing faith-based environmental initiatives, and the promotion of locally developed, community-based solutions that enhance resilience to climate challenges.

14. **Support** the development of voluntary practices of moderation, including mindful consumption, the reduction of food waste, the conservation of resources, the reduction of reliance on single-use plastics, and the reduction of carbon footprints at the individual and community levels.

15. **Call upon** States and international organizations to strengthen coordinated, long-term measures to combat climate change and advance the principles of climate justice, with particular attention to supporting people living in poverty and marginalized groups, as well as the most vulnerable countries and communities whose rights, ways of life, and cultural heritage are under threat.

16. **Affirm** our commitment to rejecting all forms of hatred and discrimination, as well as our shared responsibility to protect the living world from the destructive consequences of armed conflicts and human-induced disasters.

17. **Express** our readiness to expand interfaith dialogue on climate-related issues within the framework of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and other international platforms, bringing together spiritual wisdom, scientific knowledge, and responsible public policy to protect our common home.

18. **Affirm** that the long-term effectiveness of climate dialogue depends directly on the meaningful engagement of younger generations, and regard the **Forum of Young Religious Leaders** within the framework of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions as an important platform for inclusive partnership.

19. **Express** our readiness to present this document at international climate forums in implementation of paragraph 22 of the "Astana Declaration of Peace 2025" including within the framework of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and the Forum of Young Religious Leaders.

20. **Affirm** our determination to contribute to the development of a global culture of responsibility, moderation, and solidarity among cultures and generations, grounded in shared responsibility and aimed at preserving the integrity of the living world for present and future generations.

21. **Affirm** that the sincerity of our spiritual calling is manifested through concrete and visible actions, and invite all participants to share their experiences and engage in joint practical action, so that our cooperation may lead to tangible change and help translate our commitments into action.

22. **Support** strengthening cooperation among States, international organizations, and religious communities in advancing values-based approaches to sustainable development, including responsible consumption, human solidarity, and an ethical relationship with the environment.

23. **Express** our profound gratitude to the Republic of Kazakhstan and the people of Kazakhstan for hosting the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and for their longstanding commitment to the development of this unique platform for interfaith dialogue, which makes an invaluable contribution to consolidating efforts to achieve universal peace and strengthen the foundations of human unity.

**MAY OUR PATH TOWARD UNITY, PEACE, AND PROSPERITY BE  
BLESSED!**

*This document was developed by an international working group comprising  
of 26 experts, religious leaders, and diplomats.*

**SECRETARIAT OF THE CONGRESS OF LEADERS OF WORLD AND  
TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS**

**REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN  
ASTANA**

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