

PRESS RELEASE:

Feb. 12, 2017

UN-Habitat 9th World Urban Forum, Kuala Lumpur.

<http://www.weacreationcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Press-Release-Faith-Based-UTC-PDF-Website.pdf>

Significant Outcomes Achieved at Historic World Urban Campaign Faith-Based Urban Thinkers Campus.

Contemporary urban thinking acknowledges the significant historical legacy and continuing contributions religions and faith-based organizations make to the building and sustaining of villages, towns, and cities. Based on this awareness, the World Urban Campaign (WUC) extended the hand of goodwill to religious communities to convene an historic *Faith-Based Urban Thinkers Campus* (Faith-Based UTC) in November 2017.

Meeting in Singapore, the fifty-four diverse faith leaders from eleven countries, representing thirty-two organizations, worked hard in their sector areas--theology, the academy and education, food systems, slum/unplanned communities, community development, urban design, land tenure, good governance, data and technology, health, youth and leadership development, business and economic justice, and arts and culture--to produce outcomes that validated the mutual hopes and aspirations of UN-Habitat, the WUC, and faith-based organizations. Many significant firsts were accomplished, but at the top of the list is the "Faith-based UTC declaration," which states "The Inclusion of germane faith-based perspectives, and working relationships with faith-based organizations co-committed to the common Good, are *necessary* to the success of the New Urban Agenda."

"The reason why the success of the New Urban Agenda necessitates serious engagement and collaborative working relationships with Religions and faith-based organizations is quite simple," explains Dr. Chris Elisara, the director of the World Evangelical Alliance's Creation Care Task Force, and one of the organizers of the UTC, "an estimated 84% of the world's population lay claim to a religious identity, thus religious communities are key stakeholders in the world's urban future." Going further, Dr. Mary Nelson from the Parliament of the World's Religions, and one of the emcees for the event, expressed the prevailing sentiment at the UTC that "we firmly believe that world's faiths have a unique and necessary contribution to make to the future of cities and the NUA. The Faith-based UTC was a successful first step in the process of working out how to effectively collaborate with UN-Habitat, WUC, and other non-religious agencies and organizations for the common good of cities."

Three more significant outcomes should be noted. The first is the formation of the *International Religious Council for Urbanism (IRCU)*. The IRCU is a multi-faith body with specialist expertise in urbanism whose purpose is to represent religious concerns in dialogue with UN-Habitat, the WUC, UNEP, and other international organizations. Founding *IRCU*

members include the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the Alliance of Religions in Conservation (ARC), the Parliament of World Religions, Urban Shalom Society, and Green Faith. Invitations to join the **IRCU** are being extended to other religious organizations who may have an interest in the mission and purpose of the **IRCU**.

Second, a commitment was secured for the Faith-based UTC to develop an urban investment division within a new faith-based investment organization founded just a few days before at an international Faith in Finance Meeting in Zug, Switzerland. This is a strategically important Faith-Based UTC outcome because it means faith-based organizations can not only contribute to the NUA dialogue, but when the urban investment division is operational there will be a financial vehicle to implement faith-based proposals that help advance the NUA. More information on this initiative can be obtained at this link <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=674>.

Third, at the Faith-Based UTC the evangelical Christian community finalized a statement calling its community to action seeking urban development focused on holistic urban wellbeing that references the practical value of extra-biblical international documents such as the NUA. After seeking and receiving endorsements for the “Call to Action on Cities” from Christian organizations such as Micah Global, The Lausanne Movement, Tearfund, the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), the Congress for the New Urbanism Member’s Christian Coalition, ARocha International, etc., the statement will be publically released on Feb. 12th at the 9th World Urban Forum. To read the evangelical statement on cities refer to this link. <http://www.weacreationcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/The-Gospel-Future-of-Cities-Feb.-12-2017.pdf>.

A complete list of the outcomes of the Faith-based UTC can be obtained at the following link <http://www.weacreationcare.org/world-urban-campaign-urban-thinkers-campus-info>.

Dr. Chris Elisara
Director, WEA Creation Care Task Force / Urban Shalom Forum
celisara@worldidea.org
www.weacreationcare.org
Cell/WhatsApp +1 760 822 2871