

Statement of the Bordeaux Religious Leaders Summit

1. The Bordeaux G8 Religious Leaders' Summit 2011 continues the series of such meetings begun in 2005. Together with colleagues from Africa, a continent which should be included in the G8 and the G20 meetings, and from the Middle East, we focused our deliberations on concerns related to items on the upcoming G8 Deauville Summit 26-27th May 2011 and the G20 Cannes Summit, 3-4 November and developed recommendations to address the interconnected crises confronting humanity.

2. Our diverse backgrounds and experience enriched our consultation. The trauma of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster described by our Japanese colleagues, the experience and aspirations of our friends from countries in the Middle East and the deep concern of our African colleagues at the continued marginalization of their voice underlined the urgency of the issues under consideration.

3. The increasingly complex and perilous times in which we live require global approaches. As religious communities, our understanding of the universal is rooted in our understanding of the Divine. We appreciate the efforts of the G8 and the G20 in working towards global responses to current issues and offer our reflections in a spirit of collaboration and co-responsibility.

4. Our reflections develop many of the themes discussed at previous Religious Leaders' Summits.¹ As people of faith, we all consider ourselves to be accountable to the transcendent divine - the author and creator of all. It is this and our shared commitment to the common good, that motivates us to speak to some of the issues that are on your agenda and on ours. At the heart of

our reflections are principles and values common to our religions and universally upheld: the essential and irrevocable dignity of all human beings; accountability for the goodness of creation; the ultimate value of reconciliation and forgiveness; the centrality of freedom and justice. Policies and programmes that are clearly in accord with them have our support.

5. Although followers of our religious traditions have not always lived up to these values and some are concerned that religious conviction can contribute to conflict, we do not believe that this is generally the case. Rather, religious commitment can be and usually is the motive force that propels progress towards the world that we all wish to see. We commit ourselves anew to inter religious and inter-cultural dialogue and common action and welcome the very many new initiatives around the world. We commit ourselves to urge our communities to be proactive in advancing the ways in which our recommendations can be achieved, and to work together with the local, national and international authorities to this end.

6. Three years ago, amidst the throes of the worst global financial crisis since the Great Depression, world leaders met in Washington for the first G20 Summit. They recognised that a global crisis necessitated a global response. This new found cohesion must be strengthened and expanded to include other countries and stakeholders – civil society and religious communities – and translated into ever more effective action programmes. Only an expanded partnership based on deeply held and widely shared concerns and commitments can hope to resolve today's long-term structural problems in the areas of economics, development, climate change and peacemaking.

¹ Held in the UK (2005), Russia (2006), Germany (2007), Japan (2008), Italy (2009) and Canada (2010). Meetings are planned in the USA in 2012 and the UK in 2013

7. Current events around the world, notably in the Middle East and North Africa, make clear that people everywhere are demanding that their fundamental dignity be honoured. Countries must work together to ensure protection of the right to freedom of religion as well as political self-determination. Tolerance, openness and understanding of other peoples' cultures social structures, values and religions are essential to the very survival of an interdependent world. Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for material progress, it is a vital component of peace, security and human development. Countries must also work together to ensure respect for the religious and cultural rights the rights of individuals and groups of people as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and address the growing reality of migrants and their respective circumstances, needs and rights

8. Our overarching concerns and recommendations, which we set out below, are for human dignity and the wellbeing of the planet as these are affected by global governance, the macro-economic situation, climate change, sustainable development and investment in peace

Reforming Global Governance

9. Both the G8 and the G20 provide important fora for world leaders to meet and coordinate their actions, but these gatherings still lack the necessary global legitimacy to provide effective global impact. This does not relieve governments of their own responsibility to their citizens. These meetings must supplement rather than undermine the UN General Assembly and other UN processes. Steps need to be taken to bring both more formally within the framework of the United Nations system.

10. The G20 must open its doors to low income countries and at the very least provide a permanent seat to the African Union and to Latin American and Asian Regional bodies. Including representative nations from these regions of the world would provide greater understanding of many difficult issues and a greater mutuality in the approaches in resolving them

11. The workings of both need to be made

more transparent so that civil society and religious bodies can engage in the work, influence decisions and ensure that commitments are delivered. There is great need for substantively enhanced compliance of the G8 with its own commitments.

Macro Economic Situation

12. Many of the conditions that gave rise to the G20 meeting in November 2008 have yet to be addressed. Governments were right to take the steps that they did to shore up the financial system, but the necessary measures to regulate the financial services have yet to be agreed and implemented.

13. The crisis made clear that unfettered markets are not necessarily efficient, stable or self-correcting.

14. A robust regulatory framework is urgently needed to prevent future financial crises and to protect the most vulnerable people. Each country has a responsibility to address these issues in the context of its own economy, but the G8 and G20 countries have a responsibility for tackling these issues when cross border externalities arise.

Climate Change

15. The most pressing need to be addressed is that of climate change, which remains a uniquely imminent threat to the current and future security and prosperity of the world. G8 and G20 countries can and must strengthen the global political commitment to action and secure the binding treaty the world so urgently needs.

16. G20 countries remain responsible for almost 80% of all global emissions. They must take swift action to secure low carbon investment and to put the planet back on the path towards reducing carbon concentrations in the atmosphere. Developed countries and the largest polluters must take the lead in reducing emissions. The former must provide innovative funding to finance the technology necessary to fuel a low carbon economy.

17. Newly developed technologies should be made freely available to developing countries to ensure their widespread use.

18. The impasse of recent years suggests that world leaders have not yet achieved a consensus on the implications of the huge changes the planet has already experienced with less than a degree of temperature rise. A consensus that a transition to low carbon economy will provide possibilities for renewed economic vitality must be forged.

Development

19. In today's era of budget stringency it is imperative that aid budgets not only be maintained, but increased as countries work to fulfil their commitments to provide 0.7% of GDP for assistance to the poorest countries as the necessary fulfillment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by 2015, ensuring that international aid serves the goal of assisting all those living in poverty. In those instances of failed or failing states new delivery mechanisms need to be found to provide assistance directly to those most in need.

20. In order to tackle the HIV- AIDS pandemic, it is important that the global community recognises the necessity of offering the right of universal access to full treatment globally. Recent research and development shows that this is possible and that an important part of the relevant Millennium Development Goal could still be met by 2015.

21. Funding is necessary but not sufficient for development. The 2010 G20 Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth with its emphasis on growth, investment and skills was a real achievement and a substantial step forward but the consensus now needs to be implemented.

22. It is important that developed countries open their markets unilaterally to the least developed countries and that there be binding commitments for aid-for-trade, so that developing countries can avail themselves of the opportunities provided by trade liberalisation.

Investing in Peace

23. Global investments in peacemaking, which are miniscule compared to military budgets, should be increased and the non-military instruments useful for peacemaking strengthened and expanded. Violent military conflict – the attempt to settle se-

rious disputes by military force – typically results in the loss of innocent lives, disruption of society, thwarting of development and destruction of the environment. Moreover, military responses to terrorism often injure innocent persons, provide additional motivation for terrorist groups and place in danger basic freedoms in the societies attempting to protect themselves from terrorism. Every effort should be made to utilise dialogue and other non-violent means to thwart terrorism and to resolve disputes to advance peace. Stronger cooperation is needed to resist the victimisation of groups based on culture or religion and to protect the dignity of those denied basic human rights, including religious freedom and self-determination.

Conclusion

24. Stronger, more inclusive partnerships among governments and other stakeholders are essential to meet today's challenges. We respectfully urge the G8 and G20 to continue to expand and strengthen the needed global response to global challenges. We – leaders of diverse religious communities throughout the world– re-commit ourselves to working together across religious lines for the common good and with governments and other partners of good will. We remain convinced – each in accordance with the teachings of their tradition – that justice, compassion and reconciliation are essential for genuine peace.