



Faiths launch far-reaching action plans to help the world's poorest people

9 September 2015: Faith leaders have pledged far reaching practical action over the next 10 years to help the world's poorest people at a meeting with senior UN officials in Bristol, UK, to discuss the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The action plans, called the Bristol Commitments, were presented to Paul Ladd, Director of the United Nations Development Programme's Post-2015 Team, at the two-day Faith in the Future meeting, which finishes today. They include pledges to develop micro credit schemes for the poor, increase access to education, plant trees, invest in clean energy and green pilgrimage.

The faith leaders, who represent 24 faith traditions from around the world, also declared they would do all they could to support the new SDGs, aimed at lifting millions of people out of poverty and creating a more sustainable planet.

The [17 goals](#) will set the direction of development work worldwide for the next 15 years and will be adopted by the UN Member States during the Sustainable Development Summit on September 25 in New York. They replace the Millennium Development Goals .

The two-day Bristol UN Faiths Meeting, which finishes today, is co-hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UK-based Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC).

ARC Secretary General Martin Palmer said sustainable development was not a new idea to the faiths: "They have been working on many aspects of the SDGs for centuries, whether that's feeding millions of people, caring for them through schools, managing the land, or simply seeking to be a compassionate presence in a world that for many is extraordinarily tough.

"For the faiths it is very important that our contribution has been recognised, we are being asked to help and we are also being challenged to live up to our own words. The UN and national governments should know that we will work with you to deliver these goals."

UNDP Director Paul Ladd add: "More than 80% of the world's people express a religious affiliation. Knowing this, it becomes clear that the UN needs to work closely with faith communities over the next 15 years if the new Global Goals for Sustainable Development are to be achieved."

Notes for editor:

- **Event photographs** are available to download from Flickr: <http://tinyurl.com/p3ua5hn>
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- **ARC** works with the world's major faiths to help them develop environmental programmes based on their own beliefs, teachings and practices. www.arcworld.org
- **UNDP** partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand ground in more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations. www.undp.org
- **SDGs:** For more on the Sustainable Development Goals, visit: <http://undp.org/globalgoals>
- **Event Hashtag:** #promise2015