

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

**MESSAGE TO FAITH REPRESENTATIVES MEETING
ON FAITH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Bristol, United Kingdom 7-10 September 2015**

You have come together at an historic moment as the world prepares to adopt a new sustainable development agenda aimed at leaving no one behind.

Later this month, His Holiness Pope Francis will address the United Nations General Assembly in New York, adding his voice to our shared efforts to place people and planet on a safer, more equitable and more sustainable path.

I was privileged to attend the ‘Many Heavens, One Earth’ event at Windsor Castle, hosted by the Duke of Edinburgh in 2009, and I am encouraged to know that your work continues to build on the progress made at that gathering.

The United Nations attaches great importance to the role of faith leaders in addressing the critical needs of humanity.

Faith leaders are well placed to build bridges of understanding and cooperation. They provide vital relief, health and education to their communities, and ensure the inclusion of otherwise excluded and neglected groups and communities. Such contributions are especially important at time when strong global leadership is required to solve escalating humanitarian challenges, including the current international refugee crisis.

The United Nations will continue to count on faith leaders and communities to stay engaged as we strive to achieve the new Sustainable Development Goals worldwide, protect human rights and build lives of dignity for all.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful meeting.