



Factsheet

Fostering the Engagement of the Faith Community in Development

Background

In recognition of the critical role that the faith community plays in peace, security and development in Africa and globally, the African Union Commission, through its Citizens and Diaspora Organizations (CIDO) Directorate, the directorate responsible for non-state actors, continue to foster collaboration with the faith community. This collaboration has been on-going since 2010 and has taken several formats:

- a) the Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF),
- b) the Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism (iDove)
- c) International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD).

a) African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF)

The African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU- IFDF) is spearheaded by CIDO to promote sustainable peace through religion. The AU-IFDF was originally established in Abuja, Nigeria in 2010 to provide information on the importance of interfaith dialogue in resolving critical issues in peace and security in the continent.

Partners: The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID).

Achievements

- The IFDF has held three forums, bringing together the Interreligious Councils (IRC) or the leading interfaith organizations in places without IRCs. These took place in 2010, Abuja, Nigeria; 2016- Abuja, Nigeria; and 2018- Ndjamen, Chad.
- Facilitating elections of a steering committee of the IFDF. Elections have been held twice. The steering committee comprises of 12 members and to carries out the Forum's Declaration and sets the strategic plan for the forum.
- A new steering committee was re-elected during the third AU-IFDF in Chad in 2018. During this meeting the final version of the strategic plan was adopted by the General Assembly.
- The steering committee has met four times and produced a six-year strategy for the forum while the IFDF General Assembly has met twice.
- Organizing the Continental Day of Prayer and Action to counter the COVID-19 pandemic

b) The Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism (iDove)

iDove is a CIDO initiative founded in 2017 with the aim of introducing a soft power approach that uses religion and dialogue to prevent violent extremism. It is a youth-led cross-continental initiative that engages young experts from various backgrounds and religious beliefs, including community workers, academicians, policy makers and creative artists from Africa, Europe, Middle East and now South East Asia.

Partners: BMZ, GIZ, All Africa Conference of Churches, Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers.

Achievements

- This flagship project has demonstrated the central role that young people play in bringing change and creating innovative ways for building peace and preventing violent extremism.
- This initiative is notable for the yearly fora that bring together youth to discuss pertinent issues in the area of violent extremism) and come up with innovative- technology and communication-based approaches and projects.
- Initiative milestones include four small-scale youth-led projects, nine trainings and training of trainers, and an anticipated seven projects. These activities have been implemented in the areas of communications, arts, sports and culture.

c) International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD)

The AU through CIDO has been a member of PaRD since November 2017. PaRD brings together governmental and intergovernmental entities including civil society organizations (CSOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs), to engage the social capital and capacities vested in diverse faith communities for sustainable development and humanitarian assistance in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

PaRD aims at greater and institutionalized communication and coordination between secular and non-secular actors, while fostering new synergies through collaboration amongst its members. In addition, PaRD uses synergies with existing networks and initiatives to contribute towards a more coherent, inclusive and effective international agenda on religion and development. PaRD focuses on joint activities in knowledge exchange, capacity building and joint advocacy

The African Union through CIDO is the only African member in PaRD. The AU has been an active member particularly because of their involvement in the IFDF and the iDove Project.

The full list of partners can be accessed [here](#).