Press release

**First female Secretary General of Religions for Peace elected**

Prof. Dr. Azza Karam succeeds Dr. William F. Vendley

**Lindau, 8/22/2019** – Prof. Dr. Azza Karam becomes new Secretary General of Religions for Peace. Yesterday (Wednesday), the delegates of the 10th World Assembly elected the 50-year-old as the first female Secretary General to head the world’s largest alliance of religious communities. She succeeds Dr. William F. Vendley, who has held the office since 1994.

Azza Karam is a citizen of the Netherlands and Professor of Religion and Development at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. She is also currently working for the United Nations on issues relating to religion, development and democracy. A native of Egypt, she has worked as Senior Advisor on Culture at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and as the Coordinator of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development, where she coordinated the Global Interfaith Network for Population and Development with over 600 religious organizations from around the world. Since the 1990s, she has worked in various capacities for a number of international organizations.

The official handover and presentation of the new Secretary General will take place on Friday, August 23, 2019. **On Thursday, August 22, 2019, 12:45 p.m.,** Rev. Kyoichi Sugino, Deputy Secretary General of RfP, will give a short statement on the election of Professor Karam in the press room of the Inselhalle in Lindau.

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