

Press Release

German Federal President Steinmeier opens *Religions for Peace* 10th World Assembly

900 delegates from more than 100 countries convene in Lindau to enact concrete action for the building of multi-religious peace globally – 7.5-metre interreligious sculpture Ring for Peace will be inaugurated – Nobel Peace Prize laureate José Ramos-Horta comments on vision of positive peace

20 August 2019 | Lindau, Germany – German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has formally opened the *Religions for Peace (RfP)* 10th World Assembly, which is being held in Germany for the first time. With a ceremony at the Ring for Peace, a 7.5 meter wooden sculpture, the 900 delegates will send a lasting and unifying message of peace.

„Religions for Peace is serious in its conviction that religions must no longer be used as the justification for discord and war, but on the contrary that they can – and must – be instruments of peace. (...) We must be united in our shared belief that religion must never be cited as a justification for hatred or violence! No war must be waged in the name of religion“, so the urgent appeal of Federal President **H.E. Frank-Walter Steinmeier** at the Inselhalle in Lindau. After a multi-religious prayer led by children distinguished religious leaders comment on the central concerns of the assembly: **His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, H.E. Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah**, President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies and Co-Moderator, *RfP* and **Dr. Willam Vendley**, Secretary General, *RfP*. **Dr. Vinu Aram**, Director of the Shanti Ashram and Co-Moderator of *RfP*, then invited all delegates to join in a Pledge of Commitment According to One’s Own Faith.

At the event in the Luitpoldpark tomorrow, Wednesday, the delegates and guests will take part in an interreligious and spiritual ceremony at the Ring for Peace, a 7.5 metre wooden sculpture that will be a permanent symbol of peace among religions. In his address at the Ring for Peace Ceremony, **H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé**, United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, will emphasise that the global preservation and protection of religious sites is a sign of respect for the diversity of the world’s religions and their *raison d’être*. With these words, he will echo the symbolism of the Ring for Peace and the message associated with it: the Ring for Peace is constructed of a wide variety of wood from all over the world, forming a wooden Moebius strip – a symbol of continuity.

Advancing a multi-religious vision positive peace, what *RfP* has termed “Shared Well-Being” is on the agenda of the World Assembly on Tuesday afternoon. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President of East Timor, **José Ramos Horta**, will comment on his work on this topic.

RfP delegates have been fully prepared to discuss all 10th World Assembly themes in great depth, as they all prepared regional recommendations on each theme at their respective National or Regional Consultations, held globally throughout 2019. **Dr. William Vendley**, Secretary General of *RfP*, will present his position paper, entitled “Advancing *Shared Well-Being* as a Multi-Religious Vision of Positive Peace.” *RfP* is committed not only to preventing and ending violent conflict, but also to promoting just and harmonious societies through reconciliation to ensure that peace is sustainable. This commitment extends beyond an end to violence, and includes a personal and group transformation that promotes solidarity and recognizing that full humanity dignity can only be secured in our deep relationships with our communities, future generations and the natural world.

Religions for Peace (RfP) is the largest and most representative multi-religious coalition advancing common action among the world’s religious communities for peace. The global *Religions for Peace* network consists of close to 100 national-level affiliates (inter-religious councils), six regional inter-religious bodies and a World Council of senior religious leaders, as well as the Global Women of Faith Network and Global Interfaith Youth Network. The first World Assembly was held in October 1970 in Kyōto and led to the formal establishment of *Religions for Peace*.

For the realization of *Religions for Peace’s* World Assembly in Germany, the Foundation Peace Dialogue of the World Religions and Civil Society was established. **Prof. Dr. h.c. Wolfgang Schürer** serves as Chairman and **Ulrich Schneider** as Managing Director. The Assembly is generously supported by the Department of “Religion and Foreign Policy” of the German Federal Foreign Office, where **Dr. Andreas Görge** serves as Head of the Department of Culture and Communication. as well as the Free State of Bavaria accompany the 10th World Assembly.

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