

# Religions for Peace

## North American Women of Faith Network

RESTORE THE DIGNITY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS,  
ADVANCE THE UNIQUE LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN OF FAITH

### DECLARATION

New York, USA | 2 March 2010

We, North American women leaders of diverse religious and faith communities gather together at the Restoring Dignity: Women of Faith Leadership Summit on 1–2 March 2010 in New York, USA, on the occasion of the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women. With more than a hundred of our sisters from many different religious communities, we gather in a spirit of multi-faith cooperation to strengthen the leadership role of women of faith in restoring the inviolable dignity of every human person and advancing human prosperity and security. The Summit was convened by *Religions for Peace* International in partnership with The Salvation Army Social Justice Commission, and in collaboration with UNIFEM, United Nations Foundation, and UNFPA.

We recognize that working together as sisters in faith, we can accomplish more than we can achieve alone. The focus of the *Religions for Peace* North American Women of Faith Network is to strengthen the voices of women of faith so that women's abilities and needs can be recognized, and the dignity of women can be advanced. Our diverse beliefs, traditions and backgrounds provide a rich variety of ways to promote and advance justice and peace for all of our human family.

Acknowledging women's ability to mobilize the grassroots and broad social networks, we shared best ways to strengthen inter-religious cooperation.

As trusted and respected members of our faith communities we acknowledge our responsibility in shaping social values and public opinion.

We created North American Women of Faith Network that will function as a regional network of the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network. Building on the already existing women's networks, organizations and inter-faith groups, the North American Women of Faith Network commits to work towards developing action-oriented partnerships with Governments, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations.

Recognizing the challenges for women in North America related to poverty, health, education, gender inequality, violence against women, and misinterpretation of religions, the North American Women of Faith Network commits to:

- Mobilize women and men of faith leaders and all religious communities (through the Restoring Dignity Initiative) to break the silence and confront violence against women by raising awareness, increasing prevention, and countering the misuses of religions to justify violence;

- Engage and empower young women of faith by providing leadership roles for them in our network initiatives;
- Hold governments accountable on international treaties and conventions which are signed relating to health, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- Advance action-oriented partnerships with other agencies, including the United Nations Foundation and UNIFEM's End Violence Against Women campaign and the Women, Faith and Development Alliance;
- Strengthen multi-religious cooperation and common action for peace among women leaders across diverse religious traditions in North America;
- Promote gender equality and women's empowerment and initiate action to end poverty and address health needs for all women and children;
- Strengthen capacities of women of faith to build peace and just and harmonious societies;

New York, USA  
2 March 2010

Signed,  
The *Religions for Peace* North American Women of Faith Network Coordinating Committee  
at The Restoring Dignity Leadership Summit

**Dr. Uma Mysorekar**, Hindu, USA, President, Hindu Temple Society of North America

**Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton**, Christian Protestant, CANADA, General Secretary,  
The Canadian Council of Churches

**Pastor Ann Tiemeyer**, Christian, Program Director for Women's Ministry, National Council  
of Churches

**Mrs. Djamillah Mohamed**, Christian, USA, National Executive, Church Women United

**Mrs. Judith Hertz**, Jewish, USA, Co-Chairperson, Union for Reform Judaism: Interreligious  
Affairs

**Mrs. Rajinderjit Kaur Singh**, Sikh, USA, President, East & West Association of Sikh  
Women

**Mrs. Salima Ebrahim**, Muslim, CANADA, Board member and representative, Canadian  
Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)

**Ven. Dr. Grace Chung Lee**, Buddhist, USA, Executive Director of UN and Inter-Religious  
Affairs, Won Buddhist International

**Mrs. Brenda Smith**, Christian Protestant, USA, UN Representative, World Federation of  
Methodist and Uniting Church Women of North America

**Sr. Janice McLaughing**, Roman Catholic, USA, President of Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic

**Mrs. Daisy Khan**, Muslim, USA, Executive Director of American Society for Muslim Advancement— Founder of Women’s Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equity

*RELIGIONS FOR PEACE*—the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition—advances common action among the world’s religious communities for peace. *Religions for Peace* works to transform violent conflict, advance human development, promote just and harmonious societies, and protect the earth. The global *Religions for Peace* network comprises a World Council of senior religious leaders from all regions of the world; six regional inter-religious bodies and more than seventy national ones; and the Global Women of Faith Network and Global Youth Network.