

## **Inaugural Climate Change Conference by Religions for Peace Pakistan and Rotary International District 3271 Pakistan.**

The historic Climate Change Conference and Awards held on 23 and 24 December 2023 in Karachi marked a groundbreaking moment as Rotary International District 3271 and Religions for Peace Pakistan forged their first-ever strategic partnership, uniting two influential global entities in a shared commitment to address the urgent challenges of our changing climate.

The convergence of Rotary International and Religions for Peace in a strategic partnership at the climate change conference exemplifies a bold step forward, emphasizing the critical role that collaborative efforts between service organizations and religious communities play in addressing the global climate crisis.

On Behalf of Rotary International **Muhammad Hanif Khan** organized the Conference and on behalf of Religions for Peace Pakistan **Huma Ikramullah** organized this Conference. Both Individuals put in their time, money, resources and contacts and worked for nearly over 5 months to make this event possible. This two day mega Conference was attended by over 500 dignitaries from all walks of life including 200 children .

In a grand Ceremony the Conference was inaugurated by **H.E. The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr Arif Alvi** who highlighted that this conference witnessed the initiation of an unprecedented collaboration between Rotary and Religions for Peace, signaling a new era of cooperative efforts where the collective strength of humanitarian service and religious influence converge to combat the escalating impacts of climate change. He said that role of religious leaders and places of worship in tackling climate change challenges are pivotal as people listen to religious leaders more than they do to others. Therefore as can be seen in the COVID and in the floods the Religious leaders played a critical role in helping people as the masses are influenced by the faith leaders . He said that places of worship can also be used for providing education and schooling to the children where there is a lack of proper structure and funds.He therefore said that this conference organized jointly by Rotary and Religions for Peace was very impactful.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

The Climate Change Excellence Awards were presented to the Climate Change Champions for their services in the field of Climate Change, Interfaith Peace, harmony, Sustainable Development and Service to Humanity . These Awards serve to honor these individuals and organizations for their contributions to the World. These Excellence Awards were presented in a grand ceremony by H.E The President of Pakistan , Mr Arif Alvi to only 35 individuals in the First ever historic Climate Change Conference and Awards held on 23 and 24 December 2023 in Karachi.

We are pleased to announce that the Presidential Award was approved and presented to :

1. **Rev Shinohara, Secretary General Religions for Peace Asia**
2. **Huma Ikramullah , Secretary General Religions for Peace Pakistan and also Associate Secretary General Religions for Peace Asia .**
3. **Muhammad Hanif Khan, Vice President Religions for Peace Pakistan and also Trustee Religions for Peace Asia**
4. **Pastor Ateeq Bhatti, Chairperson Interfaith Harmony Committee- Christian leader, Religions for Peace Pakistan**

### **Childrens Poster and VideoGraphy/ Videos Competition on Climate Change by Religions for Peace Pakistan and Rotary International District 3271 Pakistan**

The President of Pakistan also witnessed the Poster Competition and Videography Competition. A huge competition was held in all the schools and colleges of Karachi for the last two months. Letters were sent on behalf of Rotary and Religions for Peace Pakistan that to highlight the Challenges of Climate Change and the childrens view point on how they view climate change . This was also done for the First time from the Joint Collaboration of Rotary and Religions for Peace Pakistan .

Over 20 thousand children participated and after screening from their schools we received over 10000 posters and videos made by the children each depicting their view point on the challenges of Climate Change. Then after a panel of ten judges were made and only three children were selected from the Poster Competition from the School, then three children from the College and three for the Videography competition. These children were given a cash prize of Rs 25000, Rs 15000 and Rs 10000 each . Rest of the Children who participated were all given certificates .

The climate change poster and video competition for children was done to raise awareness and engage young minds in environmental issues. Each Prize recipient was also brought on stage and MOC Huma Ikramullah asked them to share their ideas and thoughts behind their poster and videos, what they thought were the challenges of climate change and why they chose to make the video and posters.

This was done for multiple purposes keeping in line with the FPCC work also .

1. **Raise Awareness:** Children are powerful advocates for change. A poster and video competition allowed them to research and understand the complexities of climate change, empowering them to raise awareness among their peers, families, and communities.
2. **Educational Opportunity:** Engaging in research and video production provided students with a unique educational opportunity.
3. **Creative Expression:** Video-making and Poster making is a creative and expressive medium. This competition allowed children to use their creativity to convey complex ideas, emotions, and messages about climate change in a way that resonates with their peers.

4. **Promote Critical Thinking:** It allowed the children to analyze information, synthesize key points, and present them coherently.
5. **Encourage Action:** By creating videos and posters about climate change, children felt a sense of responsibility to take action. This competition motivated them to think about their personal habits, as well as ways they can contribute to positive environmental change.
6. **Community Engagement:** Sharing the videos and posters within the community and beyond fostered a sense of community engagement. It encouraged dialogue among students, teachers, parents, and community members about the impact of climate change and the importance of sustainable practices.
7. **Foster Environmental Stewardship:** The competition instilled a sense of environmental stewardship by encouraging responsible and sustainable behavior. Children became ambassadors for the environment, promoting practices that reduce ecological footprints.
8. **Develop Media Literacy Skills:** Creating videos and poster involved developing media literacy skills, such as storytelling, scriptwriting, and video production.
9. **Celebrate Diversity of Perspectives:** A video and poster competition allowed for a diverse range of perspectives on climate change. Children from various backgrounds and experiences contributed unique insights, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.
10. **Recognition and Rewards:** Acknowledging the efforts of participants through recognition and rewards boosted their self-esteem and motivation. This positive reinforcement reinforces the idea that their voices and actions matter.
11. **Long-Term Impact:** The competition's impact extends beyond the event itself. By engaging children in discussions and actions related to climate change, you contribute to building a generation that is more aware, responsible, and proactive in addressing environmental challenges.

In summary, organizing a video-making and poster competition for children on climate change provided a platform for education, creativity, and advocacy, empowering young minds to make a positive impact on their communities and the planet.

**Panel discussion on the Role of faith leaders and Religions for Peace with special focus on children in combatting climate change was held on 23 December 2023 in the Climate Change Conference and Award in Karachi.** It covered a range of topics related to the intersection of religion, ethics, and environmental stewardship. Here are some key points that were addressed :

**1. Theological Perspectives:**

- The various religious teachings and scriptures of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islamic religion were discussed to emphasize the responsibility of humans to care for the Earth.

- **Rev Nemoto , Senior Advisor Religions for Peace Asia** discussed how Buddhist religion and different faith traditions interpret and understand their role in environmental stewardship.

## 2. Moral Imperative:

- **Pandit Mukesh , Chairperson Interfaith Harmony Hindu Leader of Religious for Peace Pakistan** highlight the ethical dimension of addressing climate change and how it aligns with the moral principles of various faiths and the duty to protect the planet for future generations.

## 3. Community Engagement:

- **Rev Shinohara, Secretary General Religions for Peace Asia** highlighted the influence that faith leaders have within their communities and how they can leverage this influence to promote sustainable practices. He spoke about the role of Religions for Peace and also about the FPCC initiative and discussed successful examples of faith-based environmental initiatives and projects.

## 4. Education and Advocacy:

- **Rev Nemoto , Senior Advisor Religions for Peace Asia** also explored the role of faith leaders in educating their followers about climate change, its impacts, and the importance of sustainable living. He discussed how religious institutions can advocate for policies that address environmental issues at local, national, and global levels.

## 5. Interfaith Collaboration:

- **Chairperson Interfaith harmony Religions for Peace Pakistan Christian leader Pastor Ateeq Bhatti** emphasized the need for collaboration among different faith communities in addressing climate change.
- **Sardar Amar Singh Vice Chairperson Interfaith harmony Committee- Sikh leader , Religions for Peace Pakistan** discussed common values and goals that can serve as a foundation for interfaith environmental initiatives.

## 6. Practical Steps and Solutions:

- **Moderator Mr Muhammad Hanif Khan, Vice President Religions for Peace Pakistan ( Muslim )** shared practical steps that faith communities can take to reduce their environmental footprint, such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable practices.
- **Co Moderator Ali Haider, Chair Peace and Conflict Resolution Rotary International** discussed the role of renewable energy and eco-friendly initiatives in the context of religious institutions.

## 7. Crisis Response and Resilience:

- The participants asked how faith communities can contribute to disaster response and recovery in the face of climate-related events and how religious organizations can build resilience in vulnerable communities.

## 8. Global Solidarity:

- **Rev Nemoto , Senior Advisor Religions for Peace Asia** said that in order to address the global nature of climate change and the importance of solidarity among faith communities worldwide was very

important so that faith leaders can collaborate on a global scale to advocate for climate action.

**9. Challenges and Opportunities:**

- The session acknowledged challenges that faith leaders face in mobilizing their communities for environmental action and therefore it was important to identify opportunities for partnerships with other sectors, including government, businesses, and NGOs and this conference was an inspiration as a strategic partnership between Religions for Peace and Rotary International . Also how in the future Religions for Peace Pakistan in collaboration with UNICEF will be working on childrens issues and rights .

The participants expressed their view that this was the first time that in a climate change conference a panel discussion with faith leaders was held and it aimed to inspire action, foster collaboration, and explore the unique contributions that faith leaders and their communities can make in the broader movement to combat climate change.