

Leadership Dialogue Looking Back: 50 years of UNEP

Friday, March 4th 2022, UN Nairobi

Statement by Archbishop Dr Thomas Schirmacher

In the very first chapter of the Hebrew Scriptures, which the Christian and Jewish faiths share, we are told that human beings were created in the image of God and were given the responsibility to preserve creation. Humans do not own creation—it was entrusted to them. This concept is shared, in similar forms, by the vast majority of religious groups all over the world.

Safeguarding creation is a duty for every one of us. Regardless of our level of knowledge or expertise, we should be contributing our abilities and efforts to ensure that our planet remains a livable, just and peaceful home.

“Faith for Earth,” as UNEP calls its platform for religious actors, is officially described as an “initiative.” But for us participants, it is more than that. Faith for earth is an automatic conviction, because if you have faith, you must be for the earth and for any local or global effort that keeps our common dwelling place visible for humans and for all living beings—from animals and plants to the bacteria that play a role in making life possible. I thank the United Nations, UNEP, and Faith for Earth for providing this global platform.

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