

**International Partnership
on Religion and Sustainable Development
(PaRD)**

Becoming More Together

PaRD's Strategic Plan 2022-2026

Final Approved Version

10.11.2021

1. BACKGROUND

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) was founded in 2016 by 12 members. PaRD has since grown to become a partnership of over 140 members with representatives from civil society, especially religious and faith-based actors, governments, multilateral entities, and academia.

The successful growth of PaRD makes an update of its strategy a key priority. The Steering Group and the Strategic Planning Board manage the strategic planning process with the support of the PaRD Secretariat. Under the coordination of the Secretariat and with input from PaRD members, this five-year strategic plan (January 2022 to December 2026) was developed. It will be acclaimed in the Annual Meeting and General Assembly of Members.¹

2. MISSION

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) convenes governments, multilateral entities, civil society, especially religious and faith-based actors, and academia in a safe space providing continuity for dialogue, learning, and collaboration to better inform policy and practices in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.

PaRD's Current Priority Areas

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) is a dynamic multi-stakeholder global partnership that actively includes religious and faith-based actors, organisations, initiatives, and communities working towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. PaRD fosters networking, policy informing, the exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned, and strengthening capacity and evidence base on a long-term basis at equal levels. Through work-streams, PaRD currently focuses on Health (SDG 3), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Environment, Water and Climate Action (SDG 6, 13, 14, 15), and Sustaining Peace (SDG 16). In mitigating the adverse effects of newly arising global crisis, PaRD is receptive to new areas of engagement. It has initiated work groups on food security and vaccines.

3. VISION

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) is a diverse global hub, fostering the engagement of governments, multilateral entities, civil society, especially religious and faith-based actors, and academia for measurable contributions to humanitarian aid and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.

4. PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

All people and decision-makers are addressed by the 2030 Agenda. It calls everyone to action. PaRD is the embodiment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 17, “Partnerships for the Goals.” It strives to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development” (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>). Under the special scope of target 17.16, “Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement

¹ The progress towards PaRD's vision and strategic objectives will be measured by indicators outlined in a work plan.

of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries,” PaRD contributes to the SDGs (<https://indicators.report/targets/17-16/>). PaRD operates under the human rights framework and the assumption that inclusion and freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief (FoRB) is an integral part and a horizontal theme in the nexus of religion and development. PaRD takes a constructive approach to FoRB based on good practices, shedding light on its reciprocal relationship to sustainable development and humanitarian aid.

PaRD is guided by the following key partnership principles:

Relevance	Supporting contributions to the 2030 Agenda
Human Rights	Commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
Respect	Promoting respect for freedom of thought, conscience, religion, religious or secular beliefs, and for scientific findings
Inclusion and Diversity	Culture of inclusion of all forms of diversity, especially in religious, regional, age, and gender representation
Transparency	Clarity of governance structure and decision-making
Reciprocity	Mutually beneficial exchanges between members
Intellectual ownership	Recognition of the intellectual ownership of members’ contributions
Non-profit-making	Programmes, products, and publications have no commercial purpose and are available to all members

5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Three key strategic objectives will drive PaRD for the next five years, reflecting PaRD's core strategic work. These will be supported by three organisational objectives. While the strategic and organisational objectives will remain constant for the next five years, the work areas of PaRD will be responsive to the interest and engagement of members and new global challenges.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Foster Safe Space for Dialogue

Increase active participation, networking, and knowledge exchange of members in an environment conducive to discussing openly and respectfully the nexus of religion and development, and humanitarian aid.

Description

In the safe space created by PaRD, members come together to communicate regarding their experiences. Opportunities for members to network, share priorities and interests are fostered, ideas and initiatives are being co-created, and new collaboration formats are facilitated, synergising and complementing each other's efforts. Members bring about concrete results while building on existing experiences, networks, data and evidence. They engage increasingly in work-streams, work groups, and events coordinated by PaRD. Networking and collaboration among all constituencies are cultivated. Capacities among members are strengthened, synergising with partner organisations.

2. Strengthen Evidence Base

Strengthen and underscore the evidence base on the potential of the joint engagement of religious and faith-based actors, civil society, governments, and multilateral entities, and academia in sustainable development and humanitarian aid.

Description

Strategic and innovative key initiatives on common thematic areas are selected. Ongoing work-streams engage in mid-to-long-term key thematic areas, while work groups address strategic time-bound assignments on current issues. Data and evidence on the role of religious and faith-based actors collaborating with governments and multilateral entities for development are collected in synergy with other partners. Products for public relations are developed to highlight the positive role of religious actors in sustainable development, their good practices and success stories. They are shared with the public, potential members, and others as an evidence base for further engagement with religious actors.

3. Enhance Effective and Inclusive Development Practice and Policy

Encourage and support faith sensitivity, and the active involvement of religious and faith-based actors, organisations, initiatives and communities in the design and implementation of policies and practice for the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and international level.

Description

Exchange and policy dialogues among governments, religious and faith-based actors on strategic development and humanitarian aid issues are organised on global, regional, and local level. Practices enabling the involvement and contribution of faith actors are promoted. Governments and religious and faith actors are supported in the organisation of policy dialogues on sustainable development and humanitarian issues to foster links to sectoral governmental entities related to PaRD's work. Relationships, communication and exchange with multilateral entities, especially the UN advisory group to PaRD and the Interagency Task

Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (UN-IATF), are strengthened. PaRD's work is showcased in global and regional key events (including the Annual Forum and General Assembly of Members, G20 Interfaith Forum, COP, specific UN assemblies and side events).

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. Diversify membership

Ensure an inclusive and active membership, both religiously and geographically.

Description

A religiously and geographically represented diverse membership is prioritised. Regional forums that convene governments and religious actors, member governments pairing with new potential governmental members, further invitation of religious actors by their peers, as well as capacity strengthening and activities to increase visibility support PaRD in striving towards this goal.

2. Ensure financial sustainability

Expand government participation and attract additional state and non-state funders from the Global North and South to ensure the financial sustainability of the multi-stakeholder partnership.

Description

To ensure sustainability and diversity of the multi-stakeholder partnership, PaRD members, especially governments, reach out to potential new government members. Achieving greater participation by governments is key to fulfil the goal to raise additional funding. The value of PaRD's core strategic work serves as the basis to attract additional state and non-state funders from the Global North and South. If needed, an annual minimum fee for PaRD members who can afford it is introduced.

3. Enhance governance

Evaluate the effectiveness of the governance structure and working processes and adjust where needed.

Description

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development has an established governance structure and working modalities. At the same time, it is responsive and flexible to adapt to current and upcoming challenges. The Steering Group and the co-chairs ensure that future leadership has a diverse representation in terms of geography, religion, gender, age, and the required experience. Together with governmental members and UN advisory group, they are more actively involved in work-streams and work groups. Increased human resources and budget enhance the work on key priorities.

The Secretariat, represented by the Head of Secretariat, has a stronger mandate regarding the representation of PaRD, public relations work, approaching governments and potential new members, and administrative and budgetary decisions. The Secretariat's focal points for work-streams become more actively involved in content discussions, coordination, public relations, and follow-up work. Yearly accountability and evaluation mechanisms for the Secretariat and work-streams are enhanced.

Alternatives towards greater institutional independence of the PaRD Secretariat are evaluated.

ANNEX: GOVERNANCE AND WORKING MODALITIES

These contents will be fused with the more detailed existing paper on PaRD governance from 2018.

1. The **Annual Forum** and **General Assembly of Members (GAM)** is the central event and exchange platform for PaRD. Representatives from civil society, especially religious and faith-based actors, governments, multilateral entities, and academia, gather to foster collaboration and dialogue on the unique contributions of religious actors towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. It enables high-level conversations, networking, information sharing and the strengthening of cooperation within PaRD and beyond. It also enables inviting new potential members and showcasing the value proposition of PaRD. As part of the GAM, the previous Steering Group's actions are approved, and the new Steering Group members and co-chairs are elected bi-annually. In addition, the current annual activities of PaRD are validated, priority areas -also based on urgent global challenges- are identified to address the needs and interests of the members.
2. The **Steering Group** consists of thirteen members. It comprises three representatives from governments, three from multilateral entities, and six representatives from civil society, especially religious and faith-based actors, and the Head of the PaRD Secretariat ex-officio. Three **co-chairs**, each from one of the three key entities head the Steering Group. The **UN advisory group** to PaRD provides guidance to the SG in terms of thematic expertise and networks.
3. The **work-streams** are led by highly experienced **co-leads** and engage on a longer period in key areas relevant to the SDGs. The long-term engagement enables PaRD to establish institutionalised dialogue with all key entities and to mainstream contributions. Ad-hoc and short-term initiatives are organised in **work groups**. Other potential work areas need to be validated (including migration and forced displacement, reduced inequalities, anti-corruption, and religious discrimination with a focus on FoRB).
4. The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development has a **Secretariat**, which supports its work, including collaborative activities. The Secretariat coordinates all key events, including the Annual Forum and General Assembly of Members, meetings of the SG, and work-streams. It liaises with the membership and is responsible for administration, communication, quality assurance, public relations, and outreach. The Secretariat supports PaRD's activities based on the decisions of the SG and GAM and in accordance with available resources.