

## Global Sustainability Network Forum



### Origins of the GSN

The origins of the “Global Sustainability Network” stem from the endeavours of the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders signed on 2 December 2014. This was a gathering of religious leaders from across various faiths, working together to defend the dignity and freedom of the human being against the extreme forms of the globalization of indifference, such as exploitation, forced labour, prostitution, human trafficking, etc., This initiative showed, that despite the different views religions may have about the notion of God, all are fully capable of working together to defend against a grave evil in the world.

### Initiatives and Genesis of the GSN

Under the leadership of Pope Francis, the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences has organized a number of events to combat modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, as a crime against humanity. One of which was the April 2015 Plenary Session on Human Trafficking: Issues beyond Criminalisation, which ended with a series of Recommendations.

The momentum this created then led to the successful Strategic Planning Session held at Lambeth Palace in December 2015, where the mandate of the network was broadened to include global sustainability and recognise the significance of Pope Francis’ Encyclical Laudato si’, which spells out the relationship between the two emergencies of climate change and modern slavery.

In synergy with these efforts of the religious leaders and the Encyclical Laudato si’, the United Nations recently implemented the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 8. These Global Goals are now a moral imperative for the 193 UN member states.

There are many ecumenical and inter-faith initiatives already, all over the world, but none have the very concrete goal that the Global Sustainability Network has, of the defence of human dignity and freedom, and climate stability.

As part of this programme of coordinated action the Global Sustainability Network is now organising a high-level forum at the headquarters of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, which will take place at the Casina Pio IV in the Vatican on 18 March from 9AM to 1:30PM, followed by a lunch, to consider how leaders from the three key sectors of Business, Government and Media can build greater global awareness of these problems and design integrated solutions to these new emergencies.

### Goals of the GSN

In the light of the faith values that the religious leaders have highlighted, the goals of the Global Sustainability Network are:

- To promote responsible human activities, which acknowledge our obligations to respect our fellow human beings by combating modern day slavery (human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution, organ trafficking) and to protect the planet (environmental care and climate change)
- To develop a better interaction between economics, society and environment (People, Planet and Profit – Global Sustainability). Developing the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future generations.

To further its goals the Global Sustainability Network will carry out a programme of coordinated action and activity with international organisations, governments and national authorities, civil society organisations and NGOs, as well as people of good will around the world.

**The 18 March Forum objectives are the following:**

- To engage the sectors of “Government”, “Business” and “Media/Community” to contribute to the goals of the Global Sustainability Network
- For all those attending to sign a Declaration to pledge their continued support in this initiative - based on the above objectives
- Sign up for one of three separate meetings (Government, Business or Media/Community) that will discuss tangible ways forward
- The goal of each meeting would be to come up with five tangible steps that could be actioned within a five-year period to further the goals of the Global Sustainability Network. With the first step to be completed within the first twelve months
- All three groups would regroup under the umbrella of the Global Sustainability Network in Dubai to present their plans and objectives for discussion.