

Communiqué on Multi-Religious Commitment in Senegal to Women's Empowerment, Environmental Restoration, and Sustainable Peace

Issued on 30th September 2025

*“For it is He Who has appointed you stewards over the earth, and has exalted some of you over others in rank that He may try you in what He has bestowed is upon you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.”
~ Quran 6:165*

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” ~ Genesis 2:15

In traditional religion, the forest is not only a refuge for spirits, but a sanctuary for the soul and nature. Protecting the sacred wood is protecting life itself.

We, the members of the Conseil Interreligieux du Sénégal pour la Paix (Senegal Inter-Religious Council for Peace), convened in Dakar on 29–30 September 2025 for a Consultative Forum on Women's Empowerment and Environmental Restoration for Conflict Prevention, held in the presence of esteemed dignitaries, state representatives, civil society organizations, and partner institutions. The Forum provided a platform for reflection and dialogue on strengthening joint action for peace, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

We commend the Government of Senegal for its leadership and ongoing efforts to ensure that the voices of religious leaders are integrated into national and regional strategies- particularly in advancing the Great Green Wall initiative as a flagship response to desertification and land degradation in the Sahel. By contributing to Africa's green growth, impactful climate action, and environmental stewardship, these efforts also reinforce the global objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Recognizing the critical interlinkages between climate change, conflict transformation, and gender equality, we reaffirm our collective commitment to reducing environmental degradation, empowering women, and fostering sustainable peace. In doing so, we contribute to Africa's shared vision of a climate-resilient, just, and secure future.

The Senegal Inter-Religious Council for Peace represents a coalition of major faith communities in Senegal, united in deepening interfaith dialogue and advancing collaborative action. We acknowledge the unique moral authority and social influence that religious leaders and faith communities carry. Through our networks, we mobilize citizens, institutions, and community structures, guiding society through the moral and spiritual responsibility entrusted to us.

As faith leaders, we speak with moral authority on the urgent implications of climate change—its impact on food security, livelihoods, social cohesion, and peace. We remain deeply concerned that environmental degradation, coupled with structural inequalities such as the marginalization of women and youth, fuels fragility and heightens conflict risks in Senegal and across Africa.

As the Senegal Inter-Religious Council for Peace, and as part of the wider African Council of Religious Leaders—*Religions for Peace* (ACRL-RfP), a continental interreligious movement representing diverse faith traditions across 34 countries, we reaffirm our determination to raise our voices on behalf of the vulnerable and to lead collective action for justice, peace, and care for creation.

Our findings

1. Senegal's coastal, urban and agricultural systems are highly vulnerable to climate impacts. Studies and national analyses show accelerating coastal erosion, salinization of estuaries and groundwater, and rising risk to urban populations with significant portions of Senegal's population and GDP exposed to sea-level rise and coastal hazards.
2. Africa including Senegal is warming faster than many regions and is already experiencing severe climate impacts (heat extremes, floods and droughts) that threaten livelihoods, food production and ecosystems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and regional assessments underline the urgency of adaptation and mitigation.
3. Climate-related shocks are a mounting driver of displacement and humanitarian need in Africa. Disaster-related internal displacements are rising across the continent and place additional stress on fragile communities, services and social cohesion. Faith leaders must therefore include displacement prevention and durable solutions in their peacebuilding and pastoral care work.
4. Women are central to Senegal's food systems yet face structural barriers. Women make up the majority of agricultural labour and food production in Senegal but often lack land rights, finance, training and decision-making power which in turn amplifies vulnerability to climate shocks and undermines resilience. Gender-responsive action will therefore multiply the impact of environmental restoration and peacebuilding.
5. National and continental policy pathways exist that faith actors can strengthen. Senegal's NDC and sector plans set conditional and unconditional mitigation/adaptation targets; continental initiatives such as the Great Green Wall and international processes are key leverage points for finance, policy and partnerships. Faith constituencies can (and must) engage constructively to shape implementation.

Our Commitments

We commit, collectively and at local congregational levels in Senegal, to the following measurable actions:

1. Strengthen the capacity of congregational, women, and youth leaders through advocacy trainings and awareness sessions on environmental restoration, water stewardship, and gender-responsive leadership.
2. Collaborate with congregational leaders to support small-scale environmental restoration initiatives that improve access to water and natural resources for local communities, thereby reducing conflict drivers and empowering women.
3. Engage with the Government of Senegal to support the national framework for environmental restoration and conservation, while advocating for the inclusion of women, youth, and faith leaders in National Adaptation Plan processes and related climate policies.
4. Remain open to building partnerships and collaboration with state and non-state actors to advance peace, integral human development, and environmental wellbeing for shared sacred flourishing in Senegal and across Africa.
5. Integrate natural resource management into inter-religious peacebuilding programs, including early warning systems, joint resource committees, and solidarity food and security initiatives, with a focus on border and migration-affected communities.

Our Recommendations

1. **To the Government of Senegal:** Fast-track gender-responsive adaptation financing and allocate clear budget lines to community-led restoration and women's agricultural support programmes. Coordinate with faith networks as trusted local actors for delivery and monitoring.

2. **To regional and international partners:** Scale up predictable, accessible climate adaptation and loss & damage finance prioritizing (a) community-led restoration, (b) women's economic empowerment, and (c) technical support for faith-led greening initiatives (nurseries, agroforestry, water-harvesting). Evidence-based pilots should be supported to enable rapid replication.
3. **To faith communities and congregations:** Operationalize the commitments above through local action plans, transparent reporting, and partnership with women's groups, youth networks, technical universities and local government.

Call to action

We call upon all Senegalese institutions, municipalities, religious bodies, women's movements, youth networks, civil society and private sector actors to join this multi-religious commitment to restore soils, protect coasts, empower women, and prevent conflict. We will present these commitments and concrete progress at national platforms

Conclusion

We reaffirm our moral and civic duty as faith leaders to steward creation, protect the vulnerable, and build justice and lasting peace for present and future generations. We pledge to act with urgency, to learn from science and local knowledge, and to lead by example.

God bless us All, God bless Senegal.

Signed on this day, 30th September 2025,



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