

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

Issued on 28th April 2026

“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 Association Pour la Tolérance Religieuse et le Dialogue Intercommunautaire convened in Ouagadougou on 27th – 28th April 2026 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 Burkina Faso 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 Association pour la Tolérance Religieuse et le Dialogue Intercommunautaire (ATRDI) represents a leading interfaith coalition in Burkina Faso dedicated to promoting social cohesion, mutual respect, and peace through active dialogue between Muslim, Christian, and Traditional faith communities.

As an Association, we speak with moral authority on the urgent implications of climate change—its impact on food security, water scarcity, and social cohesion. 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 across the Sahelian belt.

As the Association Pour la Tolérance Religieuse et le Dialogue Intercommunautaire, in partnership with the African Council of Religious Leaders–*Religions for Peace* (ACRL-R/P), a continental interreligious movement representing diverse faith traditions across thirty-four (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. Burkina Faso is highly exposed to climate shocks, including floods, droughts, strong winds, high temperatures, and seasonal rainfall variability. These pressures threaten agriculture, water access, forests, and rural livelihoods.
2. Burkina Faso's Sahelian and Sudanian zones are increasingly affected by water scarcity, land degradation, and declining agricultural productivity. Climate projections indicate worsening drought risk and rising temperatures, which may intensify bushfires and reduce yields.
3. Climate-related shocks are deepening displacement, food insecurity, and humanitarian need. In fragile settings such as Burkina Faso, climate stress can amplify competition over land and water, worsen local grievances, and increase the burden on already strained communities and services.
4. Women are central to agriculture, food systems, and family resilience, yet many still face barriers to land access, finance, technical support, and decision-making power. Strengthening women's leadership multiplies the impact of adaptation, restoration, and peacebuilding.
5. National and continental policy pathways already exist and can be reinforced through faith-based engagement. Burkina Faso's adaptation priorities, drought-resilience efforts, and Great Green Wall-related restoration goals provide concrete entry points for partnership, advocacy, and community action.

Our Commitments

We commit, collectively, 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, climate resilience, 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 Burkina Faso to support national frameworks for environmental restoration, drought resilience, and conservation, while advocating for the inclusion of women, youth, and faith leaders in climate and adaptation processes.
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 Burkina Faso 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, displacement-affected, and climate-vulnerable communities.

Our Recommendations

1. **To the Government of Burkina Faso:** Fast-track gender-responsive adaptation financing and allocate clear budget lines to community-led restoration, water access, 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-and-damage finance prioritizing community-led restoration, women's economic empowerment, and technical support for faith-led greening initiatives, including nurseries, agroforestry, water-harvesting, and soil restoration.



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 institutions, and local government.

Call to action

We call upon all Burkinabe 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 water and forests, 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 Burkina Faso.

Issued on this day, 28th April 2026, by:

Organization	Name	Signature
Association pour la Tolérance Religieuse et le Dialogue Intercommunautaire (ATR/DI)		
African Council of Religious Leaders- <i>Religions for Peace</i>		