



**THE MILLENNIUM WORLD PEACE SUMMIT
OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS**

For Immediate Release

Contact: Anne Glauber/Millicent White
Phone: (212) 715-1571
Press Office: (212) 872-7266
Cell: (646) 623-3199

**RELIGIOUS LEADERS PRESENT COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL PEACE
TO U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL AT HISTORIC RELIGIOUS SUMMIT**

Leaders to make a commitment to denounce all violence in the name of religion

New York—[August 29, 2000]— Participants of the Millennium Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders took the historic step, today, of presenting a Commitment to Global Peace to UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan that outlines key areas in which religious leaders can play an active role in reducing conflict and addressing the critical needs of humankind.

The Commitment will be signed by religious leaders during the last two days of the Summit. The Commitment condemns all violence in the name of religion and makes a forceful appeal to all religious, ethnic and national groups to respect the right of freedom of religion. The goal is to build an unprecedented collaboration among leaders of the world's diverse faith traditions who will commit to cooperate in building peaceful societies.

The Commitment also includes statements on collaborating with the United Nations in the pursuit of peace, promoting the eradication of poverty and assuming a shared responsibility for expanding access to education, healthcare and an opportunity to achieve a secure and sustainable livelihood. The commitment also pledges signatories to educate their communities on the need to make environmental protection a priority.

“This Commitment is testimony to the power of words. It is a power that can alter perceptions, shape behaviors and begin to change what is said and done in the name of religion,” notes Bawa Jain, the Summit’s Secretary-General. “I am gratified that the Summit’s leaders will be signing this historic document; it is a first step in developing ways that the worlds’ religions can work together to increase understanding and tolerance.”

The presentation of the Commitment occurred during the second day of the Religious Summit that also featured remarks from U.N. Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan, Summit Honorary Chair Ted Turner and renowned religious figures such as Francis Cardinal Arinze of the

Vatican; Abdullah al-Obaid, Secretary-General of the World Muslim League; Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau; The Most Reverend Kuni Kumiaki, Jingu Daiguji, High Priest, of the Grand Shrine at Ise; and the Reverend Konrad Raiser among many others.

The Commitment was developed with the contribution of the Summit's International Advisory Council and with input from the Scholars Group at Harvard Divinity School and other Summit strategic partners in the months preceding the Religious Summit. It was then circulated among religious leaders for their input and changes. The Commitment includes input from all the major religious faiths.

The Religious Summit will continue through Thursday, August 31 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, where religious leaders will engage in working group sessions to devise ongoing initiatives to address regional conflict, poverty and environmental problems. In addition to the signing of the Commitment to Global Peace, another expected outcome of the Religious Summit is the formation of an "Advisory Council" of religious leaders to support the United Nations in its conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

The Summit represents the first time in history that religious and spiritual leaders of the world's diverse faith traditions have come together to discuss forging a partnership of peace with the United Nations and to identify ways that the worldwide religious communities can work together on promoting peace, eradicating poverty and moving forward with environmental initiatives.

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