

**Faith and Development Leaders Meeting**  
**Faith-inspired networks and organizations:**  
**Their contributions to development programs and policies**

A meeting organized by the Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics at The World Bank, the UK Department for International Development, and the World Faiths Development Dialogue

**Accra, Ghana, July 1-3, 2009**

**Opening remarks, Archbishop Robert Aboagye-Mensah**

We'll take a moment of silence to pray.

Good morning to the co-chairs of this meeting, Lord Carey, Mr. Graeme Wheeler, and to fellow participants. Today is an important day for us in Ghana. It is our Republic Day so it is a holiday. It was the only day I was going to get some rest but we were requested by the World Bank to be here and I am glad to be a part of this. So we ask you to enjoy this day with us. As you know, we have met you today as faith leaders to celebrate the various contributions our networks and organizations have made on development programs and policies.

The three main objectives for the meeting are: (i) to take stock of the extensive and rich experience of faith-inspired networks and organizations in international development programs and policy; ii) to discuss the role of religious leaders as advocates on strategy development issues at regional and global levels with emphasis on how to develop successful development programs and policies; and (iii) thirdly, identify clear ways for expanding analytical, capacity development, and policy dialogue involving faith and development especially for service delivery in education, health, and social protection.

We have met at a time when our global village is going through harsh and severe economic crisis with serious adverse impact on the poor across the world, and especially in Africa. As faith-inspired Institutions, we are challenged to act through our organizations, and our networks to address this. The word of God reminds us that faith-inspired by love must go to work, otherwise it is dead. Let me quote this: "My brothers and sisters, what good is it for people to say they have faith if the actions do not prove it? Suppose there are brothers and sisters who need clothes and do not have enough to eat, what good is there in saying to them, 'God bless you. Keep warm and eat well,' if you don't give them the necessities of life. So it is with faith, if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead."

Throughout history, leaders and ordinary people inspired by their faith in God have confronted situations, policies, and beliefs that have aided human beings in their social, spiritual, economic, and political, development. For instance, in the abolition of slavery in Africa, Christian leaders played a critical role in reclaiming human dignity. In Africa today, some of the best educational and health institutions are the ones founded and maintained by religious bodies such as the CHAG. In Ghana for example, the establishment of educational institutions like Franciscan High School, Holy Child, Blue Bells, and many others helped to provide leaders who led the fight for political independence. In core delivery, the faith-inspired networks and organizations are leading in the provision of quality health care for the majority of the population that live in rural areas and poor communities. In many cases, they are bidden to do so

much with the little resources that they are able to mobilize. They do take initiatives in addressing some of the social evils as well. For instance, in Ghana it was the faith-based institutions like the Salvation Army that brought the HIV/AIDS menace into the public domain.

The contributions that faith-based organizations and networks have made in the past should challenge and inspire us to address the economic crisis that confronts us today. It is therefore most timely that we have met here today in Accra on our Republic Day with the help of the Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics at the World Bank, UK Department for International Development, the World Faiths Development Dialogue, and the Christian Health Association of Ghana for a dialogue on issues and policies that will help transform adverse human conditions, especially that of the poor. I am confident that at the end of this meeting we shall come out with policies that will help to alleviate poverty and thus improve considerably the conditions of our people.

On this note, I warmly welcome you to Ghana. I welcome all of you to today's Ghana for this important meeting and hope that our faith will inspire us to seek ways of collaborating with the World Bank and other development-oriented organizations that place importance on values and ethics that enhance human dignity. Have a fruitful celebration.