



PMU – Swedish Pentecostal Churches, relief and development body.

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Mikael Jägerskog, Senior Policy Advisor and UN focal point for PMU and Pentecostal World Fellowship

mikael.jagerskog@pmu.se, Mobile: +46 (0)76 536 96 15 or +46 (0)708 776 778, the Ecumenical Centre Alvik, Stockholm, Sweden

Chapeau

Global inequalities are today leaving billions of people in the world hungry, angry and frustrated. At the same time we have a number of ecological and biological crises. Or to mirror the UN Secretary General in his warning: the world is on the brink of breakdown and business as usual is no longer an option. As Pentecostals we therefore welcome the ambitions and intentions formulated in the agenda for The Summit of the Future.

We see the Summit as an opportunity to be very practical and brave in dealing with our global failures and in responding to the great challenges of our time. We believe that the global community, including people in power, have the awareness of the situation and often also knowledge on how to act, but implementation is lacking. Based on this PMU urge the planners of the summit to

- Focus on hope and solutions
- Create room for practical problem solving
- Apply a holistic perspective that focuses on systemic changes
- Encourage states to be visionary and brave in their commitments
- Ensure that vulnerable groups are listened to
- Make room in the conversations for meaningful engagement from young people, if possible arrange the meetings in an intergenerational style where joint learning is at the core
- Not avoid sensitive topics such as global migration
- Consider the role faith and religion plays in processes of change

PMU, which is an active part of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF), are ready to actively engage in the conversations, both from a local perspective and a policy perspective, informed by our faith-tradition and our long experience of promoting dignity and justice for the most vulnerable in the world.

Gus Speth, U.S. Advisor on Climate Change framed the need for engagement from the religious community as follows – “I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought with 30 years of good science we could address those problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy... And to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation – and we scientists don’t know how to do that.”

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

The consequences of the unsustainable lifestyle endured by the riches in our world has to be addressed in an adequate and practical way. At large, global resource depletion and pollution are not accounted for in our economic balance sheets, and environmental externalities are barely featured in the price of products available on the market. This is a downward spiral that heavily burdens future generations and also heavily affect workers in current global production chains, such as for instance in the mining industry. One question to be addressed linked to the summit is therefore if governments and companies will be willing to limit their ambitions for unending, and unrealistic, economic growth. Visionary concepts such as ‘de-growth’ needs to be further explored and tested since the sustainability agenda in reality very much has failed. It would for instance be helpful to measure economic success beyond GDP.

The global neglect of vital ecosystems, crucial for people and the planet, is central to the problems we face in the world today. PMU and the Global Pentecostal community wants to highlight what is stated by Pope Francis in the Laudato Si: “We are faced...with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” Social rights, justice, mercy and a healthy planet need to be a starting point for any policy or decision about the future of our joint life at our planet.

We therefore support the recent conceptualization or language of ‘Human Rights Economy’ and its focus on a revised global economical architecture. Here we see an opportunity to use cultural or religious terms to promote the well needed paradigm shift formulated in ‘Human Rights Economy’. For instance, in the Christian tradition we use the concept of “the Year of Jubilee” - a biblical concept indicating that injustices, that develop over time, need to be corrected regularly. The year of jubilee occurs every 50th year and is a reset of the society where injustices are cleared out and people are for instance released from the burdens of loans. Religious narratives like this could be helpful when promoting an ethical agenda in financial systems. The international financial architecture needs to focus more on supporting the SDG agenda, which for instance has implications for taxation, corruption, social safety nets, cost of sovereign borrowing etc. Also global businesses, the top 1% richest as well as the super rich in our world need to contribute more in financing the SDG:s.

We also want to point to the fact that our global policy- and decision making always needs to be informed by a long-term perspective. The current short term focus by politicians on the next election, and business leaders on quarterly balance sheets, exemplify short termism, often framed as being efficient and rational. However, this efficiency risk leading to compromised ethic – or ‘moral’ values. In the Christian tradition we acknowledge that we build on earlier generations and that we work for a restored world for both current and future generations. It is a systemic approach that doesn’t cut corners or aim for low hanging fruits.

Chapter II. International peace and security

During a number of years there has been a global backlash for the civil society related to peace work. We believe that civil society representatives as well as church and religious representatives play a crucial role in promoting peace and we believe that these actors are very much needed in order to succeed in peace efforts. It is therefore crucial that the global summit highlights that these kinds of actors need to be part of any peace making effort - as advisors, implementers and watchdogs.

We are also promoting a serious and mature discussion concerning the military industry in our world. The amount of money states globally spend on military and defense is absurd and the money should rather be diverted to peace efforts or food production.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

As far as possible, we would like to see that scientific innovations and solutions are made available for all. The patent systems need to be reformed urgently and new technologies should be seen more as common goods that serve humanity and the planet than private property only. Advancements in this field would be welcomed so that the current unequal system is challenged and modified.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

One often quoted saying, attributed to Indigenous Americans, could be a useful motto for the summit: “We have not inherited the Earth from our parents. We have borrowed it from our children”. Future generations must therefore be represented meaningfully and effectively in decision-making that may impact their lives. The global Pentecostal church movement consists to a high degree of young people, especially from Africa. We are very much ready to contribute to the work of the new UN Youth Office, a standing UN Youth Townhall and similar initiatives. We welcome that the UN actively and seriously creates space for young people. We want to highlight that many young people are carried by faith, which is a perspective that should not be overlooked in the dialogue with youth. The religious community of young people is an asset and valuable resource even in global UN forums. Many young religious persons are eager to bring hope and a future to their local community as well as the global community.

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

When it comes to international structures we acknowledge that a large part of the global community is not well represented around tables where important decisions are being made. The religious community, including both faith leaders and faith representatives, is a group that should be included as a major stakeholder group in the UN system. Here UNEP has been pioneering a broader dialogue under the Faith for Earth Initiative as well as the Faith Pavilion at COP in Dubai. This kind of interaction and space for the religious community to easily and naturally lean in to global conversations is something that we would like to see in all parts of the UN system as well as in the General Assembly.