

Global Agenda Council on the Role of Faith 2012-2014



COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE STATE
OF THE WORLD



Understanding/Context

The religious landscape has shifted over the past decades. Evidence shows that in some societies the role of faith is fading, with an increasing number of people having no religious affiliation and a general resistance to identify as someone who practises religion. Conversely, 80% of the world's population adheres to a religion, and in these societies recognition of the role played by faith and religious culture in public life and in tackling global problems is growing. In such societies, faith groups exercise authority, strengthen the social capital and provide services; they advocate for change and mobilize communities. There is a sense that the space where faith and society interact is evolving in dynamic ways, and that changes in society are affecting the relationships between faith groups and other societal and economic stakeholders.

Shaping the Agenda

These shifts create an opportunity for collaboration to seek positive change and social transformation. Members of the Global Agenda Council on the Role of Faith are committed to restoring faith to public life and promoting faith-based dialogue between the public and private spheres. Council Members understand the increasing desire of many leaders to find a trusted vehicle for speaking openly about their faith and assessing their understanding of the relevance of faith.

In 2012, the Council developed an online survey for global leaders and executives to consider the significance of faith in society. The survey sought to elicit from them the issues, problems and geographic areas where they felt faith plays a role, and posed key questions about attitudes, beliefs and general perceptions pertaining to religion and faith. It is expected to generate a pool of knowledge on

the place religious belief holds in public life, and a renewed understanding of religion in today's society. The Council also worked to create a Forum blog series on public perceptions of how faith can have impact on many sectors and challenges in society.

“There is a sense that the space where faith and society interact is evolving in dynamic ways, and that changes in society are affecting the relationships between faith groups and other societal and economic stakeholders.”

Over the next year, the Council aims to continue these initiatives and will disseminate the implications of restoring religion to the public sphere, including results from the online survey. It will also report on the issue of bringing religion into the mainstream by developing a one-page statement, the core principles of which will emphasize the practical value of faith and the role of faith groups in achieving positive change.

Contact Information

Research Analyst: Lisa Ventura, Associate, Global Agenda Councils, lisa.ventura@weforum.org

Council Manager: Silvia Magnoni, Associate Director, Constituents, silvia.magnoni@weforum.org

Forum Lead: Saadia Zahidi, Senior Director, Head, Constituents, saadia.zahidi@weforum.org