

# Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Calls for Ethical Leadership and Ubuntu-Driven Action at G20 Interfaith Forum in Cape Town

*Global leaders, faith communities, and civil society should embrace ethical leadership, prioritize the most vulnerable, and embody the spirit of Ubuntu*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- In a stirring opening address at the G20 Interfaith Forum held in Cape Town, Archbishop Dr. Thabo Makgoba issued a clarion call for global leaders, faith communities, and civil society to embrace ethical leadership, prioritize the most vulnerable, and embody the spirit of Ubuntu in shaping a more just and compassionate world.

Speaking to a diverse assembly of nearly 500 participants, which included religious leaders, youth advocates, and policy influencers from 52 different countries, the Archbishop welcomed participants to “one of the most beautiful cities of the world” and emphasized the unique role of faith communities in addressing global challenges.

## Faith as a Moral Compass in Global Governance

Archbishop Makgoba underscored the significance of the G20 Interfaith Forum as a moral voice in global discourse, noting that while it is not a formal engagement group, its partners closely with civil society and think-tank platforms to influence policy and values.

“With 84% of the world's population affiliated with a religious faith, this forum can reflect, influence, and shape the values and actions of people in our world,” he said. “It is therefore an



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indispensable voice in the global debate.”

Drawing from the Christian tradition, he invoked John 10:10: “I have come that you may have abundant life,” and emphasized that this promise must extend to all—not just those with political or economic privilege. “We aspire to an abundant life really for all, not only for those with powerful connections in politics or business.”

### Ubuntu in Action: Leaving No One Behind

The Archbishop framed South Africa’s leadership around the principle of Ubuntu—“I am because we are”—and called for a renewed focus on vulnerable communities. He highlighted the interconnectedness of global crises, from climate change to pandemics, and urged collective solutions.

“In an interconnected world, the challenges faced by one nation impact all nations,” he said. “By promoting equality, we strive to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities for all individuals and nations, regardless of their economic status, gender, race, geographic location or any other characteristic.”

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*Archbishop Thabo Makgoba*

He also emphasized the importance of sustainability:

“Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

### A Moral Scandal: Hunger and Poverty in a World of Abundance

Referencing South Africa’s adoption of Brazil’s Global

Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty declaration, Archbishop Makgoba called hunger a “moral scandal” in a world with sufficient resources and knowledge to prevent it.

He quoted Renier Koegelenberg’s challenge from a recent IF20 webinar: “Why are people (especially children) dying of hunger globally, and in South Africa?” The Archbishop added, “If our values shape our priorities, we cannot tolerate this scandal.”

He urged business leaders to move beyond charitable donations toward real investments in sustainable livelihoods. “Partner with our communities to help build local capacity,” he said,



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citing successful models like the CDDC Trust and Kumba Iron Ore's work in the Northern Cape.

To faith communities, he issued a challenge: "We have a vital role to play in shifting from dependency to empowerment. Our moral authority comes with a practical responsibility to lead this change."

And to ordinary citizens, he offered a call to dignity: "It is time to reclaim your dignity as producers, not just consumers. The land that once sustained our ancestors can nourish us again."



Meeting with Global Leaders

### Ethical Leadership and a New Heart for Development

In a powerful critique of global development efforts, Archbishop Makgoba warned that failure to meet the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals would not stem from a lack of expertise or summits, but from misplaced priorities.

"The world does not only need a new technical 'developmental paradigm'... It rather needs a new 'heart': a correction of priorities based on values, on ethical, servant leadership—not only to 'tolerate' your neighbour, but to love your neighbour as you love yourself."

He invoked Martin Luther's definition of sin as "being bent on your own personal needs," contrasting it with true freedom: "to serve the needs of others."

South Africa, he said, must lead by example. "We cannot expect change only from the rich Global North; we need to be self-critical about conditions and priorities within our own countries and regions."

### A Plea for Peace and People-Centered Policy

Addressing the global rise in conflict and militarization, Archbishop Makgoba lamented the diversion of resources from health and social programs to weapons and security.

"Our plea as faith leaders to global leaders is to 'Put People First'—pump resources into life-enhancing programmes and strengthen peace-making efforts to stop violent conflicts."

He emphasized the unique reach and trust of faith networks: "Our faith networks are some of the most trusted, efficient partners that reach all people at grassroots level. That is why we

appeal to political and business leaders to work and partner with us—after all, we are all instruments in God’s hands.”

Quoting Katherine Marshall, he concluded: “Our mission... is to keep a laser focus on the problems of the most vulnerable, particularly children, women, refugees, the hungry, and too many other groups.”

Conclusion: From Worship to Action

Archbishop Makgoba closed with a call to live out faith through service: “Our faith therefore demands of us that worship should drive us from our knees, and send us out from our churches, our mosques, and our temples to engage the world and ensure that our Creator’s intention is fulfilled.”

“May our Creator bless this gathering, and all those gathered. Once again, welcome to Cape Town.”

Marianna Richardson

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