

Religions for Peace

13 March 2015

Respected Panel of Judges
World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize

Dear Esteemed Judges:

Warm greetings.

As the Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition advancing common action for peace, and President of Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations, that organizes the official United Nations Interfaith Harmony Week commemoration, I welcome with enthusiasm this opportunity to write in support of the 2014 Festival of Faiths, *Sacred Earth Sacred Self*, candidacy for the 2015 World Interfaith Harmony Week prize.

I believe I am in an ideal position to evaluate the 2014 Festival of Faiths, *Sacred Earth Sacred Self* candidacy: I have followed the Festival of Faiths work carefully for a number of years and observed its singularly creative character. I have also worked with the leadership of the Festival of Faiths and have participated in many of their events, and thus have been given the chance to observe first hand the Festival's ability to advance mutual respect, affection and solidarity among the people of diverse faiths.

Since 1996, the Festival of Faiths has served as a multi religious mechanism that promotes principled cooperation for peace and harmony. Today the Festival of Faiths draws thousands of visitors from around the world in week-long celebrations, designed to raise awareness and ignite action by offering programs that highlights the shared moral concerns of people of all faiths.

In 2014, *Sacred Earth Sacred Self*, united people of faith from around the world in dialogue about the deep interconnections and sacred relationships that we have with ourselves, each other, and all life on earth.

I believe it is incredibly important to have gatherings like the Festival of Faiths to convene and catalyze faithful people around issues of critical global concern. The Center for Interfaith Relations, the host of the annual Festival of Faiths, is a tremendous partner spreading an important message of harmony and peace among the followers of all the world's religions, faiths, and beliefs.

I encourage you to recognize the 2014 Festival of Faiths as a shining example of what the World Interfaith Harmony Week seeks to accomplish, which is to spread the message of harmony and peace in a voluntary and inclusive manner.

Sincerely,



Dr. William F. Vendley
Secretary General