

# Muslim Platform for Sustainable Development

## Africa Consultation Feedback

26 November 2016

Nairobi

### 1. Introduction

Throughout 2016, Islamic Relief Worldwide has been consulting with Muslim civil society organisations around the world about the need to set up a global network to support Muslim engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approved in September 2015 by the United Nations. Governments are responsible for the development of plans to deliver on the SDGs and multi-lateral and bi-lateral funders are committed to supporting such plans. The concern within the Muslim World is that the Agenda 2030 discourse is somewhat secular and alienated from mainstream faith discourse, which is likely to lead to disengagement or distrust, between faith based organisations- in particular Muslim civil society organisations- resulting in a fractured, disengaged and uncoordinated effort to deliver the SDGs.

The Regional consultations organised in 2016 for Asia, Africa, Middle East and Europe are aimed at the following:

1. Understanding the challenges and opportunities for FBO engagement on the 2030 Agenda in the Muslim World and what resources are available.
2. Understanding what a platform might realistically achieve and what appetite there is amongst Muslim CSOs to engage with the process.
3. What structure a platform might take and what actions are needed to establish and maintain it.
4. What resources are needed and available and what policy areas need to be prioritised.

Participants in the African Consultation

Country	Name of organisation	Name	Position
Sierra Leone	Islamic Action Network	Ahmed Ramadan Jalloh	National Coordinator
Morocco	Al-Hiden	Imane Belghiti	Head of International Relations
Uganda	Uganda Muslim Supreme Council	Muhamad Menya Balonde	Programme Officer
South Africa	South African National Zakat Fund (SANZAF)	Hassiem Cassiem	Chairman
Nigeria	Islamic Green Club	Risikatu Bola Usman	
Kenya	Al-Khair Foundation	Mohammad Tarik	Country Director
Kenya	WAMY	Ibrahim Irshad	Country Director
Kenya	WAMY	Moulid Daud Abdi	

Kenya	Africa Education & Development Trust	Umar H Abdalla	CEO
Kenya	Global One	Ibrahim Lethome Asmani	
Kenya	United Muslim Relief	Abdul Ghani	Country Director
Kenya	SUPKEM	Dr Hassan Kinyua Omari	Lecturer
Kenya	Islamic Relief	Mohammad Obaidur Rahman	Country Director
UK	Islamic Relief Academy	Dr Muhtari Aminu-Kano	Head of Research & Development
UK	Islamic Relief Worldwide	Atallah FitzGibbon	Policy & Strategy Manager
UK	Islamic Relief Academy	Shabaana Kidy	Research & Development Officer
UK	Islamic Relief Worldwide	Abdul Hamed Salem	Policy & Research Analyst

## 2.1. Understanding the challenges and opportunities for engagement on the 2030 Agenda in the Muslim World and what resources are available.

Participants were divided into two groups to conduct a SWOT Analysis, the table below highlight the results of this process

Strength		Weaknesses	
Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong faith inspiration- direct relation to the sources. Authenticity.</li> <li>• Faith/religion has global respect &amp; recognition</li> <li>• Potential to mobilise- e.g. in sermons and congregations</li> <li>• Lots of wealth in the Muslim world- Islamic financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kenyan example- lots of provisions for Islamic banking and acceptance of Islamic finance by non-religious groups</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Togetherness &amp; unity amongst global community</li> <li>• Potential of thought leadership</li> <li>• Potential to mobilise strong educational networks</li> <li>• Ability to change mind-sets- qualities/transparency/trust</li> <li>• Strength of numbers- number of FBOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspiration from divine values</li> <li>• Richness of Islamic teachings &amp; traditions</li> <li>• Passion &amp; motivation</li> <li>• Volunteering</li> <li>• Universal brotherhood</li> <li>• In-depth knowledge and in touch with vulnerable communities</li> <li>• Demography</li> <li>• Network and available platforms for mobilisation and Information sharing</li> <li>• Available institutions- zakat, waqf, sadaqa etc</li> <li>• On-going work in development by Muslims CSOs</li> <li>• More Muslim Professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not utilising media and technology</li> <li>• Internal lack of networking</li> <li>• Lack of financing for representation at international level</li> <li>• Lack of involvement on global/international fora</li> <li>• Little or nothing in the way of leadership</li> <li>• Lack of information- many NGOs may not even be aware of the SDGs &amp; Agenda 2030</li> <li>• Lack of broader involvement in groups covering broad issues</li> <li>• Stereotyping of Muslims</li> <li>• Need to rectify our own internal misconceptions about Islamic</li> <li>• Lack of representation of women- strong marginalisation</li> <li>• Fighting and disunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of unity</li> <li>• Insufficient knowledge of relevant Islamic principles amongst Muslims</li> <li>• Lack of paper dissemination mechanism- media etc.</li> <li>• Misinterpretation of Islamic teachings- jihad, FGM, GBV, EFM etc.</li> <li>• No mechanism for cooperation and collaboration</li> <li>• Poor institutional/organisational capacity</li> <li>• Short-lived, hand-to-mouth priorities</li> <li>• Organisations not being run professionally</li> <li>• Credible, acceptable leadership</li> </ul>

		between sects • Gap of Muslim scholars to guide communities on issues- related to low pay/wages for Islamic scholars	
Opportunities		Threats	
Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for mobilisation</li> <li>• Resourcing</li> <li>• Opportunity to engage at international level &amp; amplify voice</li> <li>• More networking with other faith communities on mutual positions</li> <li>• Building on our internal struggles of discourse &amp; unity</li> <li>• Capacity building in representation and programmes</li> <li>• Peace building &amp; countering violence/radicalisation</li> <li>• Resourcing &amp; funding- de-risking</li> <li>• Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appetite for literacy and knowledge about Islam from key development players</li> <li>• Crisis of confidence in current development models</li> <li>• Recognition of the role of faith communities</li> <li>• Increase in funding opportunities</li> <li>• Willingness of other faith traditions to collaborate with Muslim CSOs</li> <li>• Increasingly Muslim CSOs are being consulted</li> <li>• Islamic financial institutions</li> <li>• Social media and new technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wars, conflict and instability</li> <li>• Weakening of faith institutions</li> <li>• Differing definitions- e.g. UN positions on the family</li> <li>• Lack of Islamic centres</li> <li>• Muslim voice is absent from politics and decision making- leads to isolation &amp; marginalisation</li> <li>• Proselytising from the north- e.g. positions on minority groups orientation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative perception as terrorists etc.</li> <li>• Increasing restriction on financial transactions for Muslim institutions- de-risking</li> <li>• Rich Muslim groups do not prioritise addressing international development issues and support for Muslim CSOs- building mosques only</li> <li>• Unfriendly legal &amp; policy frameworks</li> <li>• Divide and rule of ummah based on sect and other differences</li> <li>• Technology- YouTube (ISIS)</li> <li>• Geo-political rivalry between key Muslim countries which is polarising Muslims</li> </ul>

## 2.2. Current Engagement and Resources of Muslim FBOs devoted to SDG Delivery

The Participants were then given all 17 SDGs and were told to highlight the main three focus areas their respected organisations tackle as well as any other focus areas, see illustrated below.

Organisation	SDGs																
	No Poverty	Zero Hunger	Good Health & wellbeing	Quality Education	Gender Equality	Clean Water & Sanitation	Affordable & Clean Energy	Decent Work & Economic Growth	Industry Innovation & Infrastructure	Reduced Inequalities	Sustainable Cities & Communities	Responsible Consumption & Production	Climate Action	Life Below Water	Life on Land	Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions	Partnerships for the Goals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Global One Kenya	█	█		█	█												
SANZAF <sup>[AS1]</sup>	█																
UMR		█	█					█									
Islamic Green Club Empowerment Initiative(Nigeria)								█					█				
Africa Education & Development Trust				█				█		█							
Al-Hidn (morocco)			█	█	█												
AKF		█		█		█		█									
WAMY Kenya				█	█	█											
Islamic Action Group (ISLAC)		█	█														
UMSC			█	█				█									█
Islamic Relief Kenya			█														

█	First Focus Area
█	Second Focus Area
█	Third Focus Area
█	Other Focus Areas

### Reflection on gaps

The mapping contribution discussion generated very useful analysis in terms of what organisations in general tend to focus on which in the Africa context was more centred on socially related SDGs.

However there was great emphasis on the importance of educating Muslim communities and organisations about the SDGs especially within Africa.

### **3.1. TOR for the Platform**

The participants felt that the platform should identify a vision and mission and therefore came up with the below:

#### **Vision**

This initiative is a long term project for Muslim CSO Action on understanding and contributing towards the 2030 Agenda and beyond.

#### **Mission**

1. Bringing integrity and trust to the 2030 Agenda through agreeing common discourse from Islamic perspectives.
2. Ensuring engagement through knowledge exchange, networking and coordination.
3. Increased sensitisation and implementation of the SDGs through capacity and leadership building.
4. Mobilising resources

### **3.2. Specific Areas for Development of Discourse within the SDGs**

The below highlights the SDGs that the participants felt the platform should address:

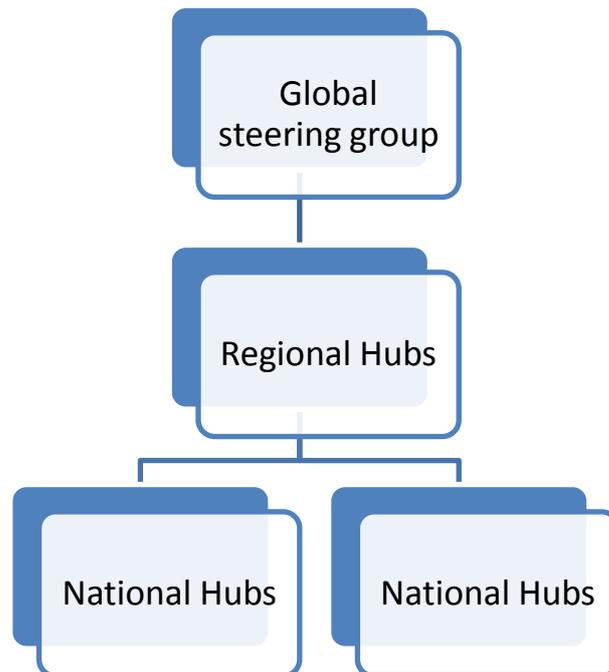
1. Health (WASH)
2. Education
3. Economic Empowerment/financing
4. Climate Justice
5. Leadership (capacity Building/governance)
6. Conflict transformation & Peace Building
7. Gender Justice & Family

The discussions then move on to the principles/values which define the platform:

- Inclusivity
- Rights based
- Humility
- Consistency
- Sincerity – ikhlas
- Unity
- Love

### 3.3. What structure & form might a platform take?

The below figure illustrated the proposed structure



The structure of the platform recognises that the national hubs will carry out the majority of the implementation work for the SDGs. The regional hub could carry out much of the advocacy and coordination for the platform while the Global Steering committee is to take on a secretariat position within the platform. It was suggested that the platform establishes a set of standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at all levels - not a constitution. The participants envisaged the platform to add value to the current work of the respected organisations rather than to compete on the implementation of their work. It was suggested that the Global Steering committee should convene bi-annually (every 6 months) and that the regional Hubs meet quarterly or bi-annually to discuss progress. Further discussion branched out to include mechanisms to handle possible tensions within the platform.

More discussion was generated with regards to the Global Steering group highlighting their role within this structure. These roles included:

- Global planning and strategising the course of action for the platform
- Identifying opportunities for resource mobilisation
- Monitoring website content and managing coordination - including knowledge hubs

### 3.4. Membership Criteria

The participants thought that it was important that membership was applied to organisations that are currently focusing or engaging in the SDGs, the discussion generated the following criteria:

- Minimum criteria is necessary to ensure values are not diluted
- Potential members should be funded or run by Muslims
  - Inspired by Islamic values

- Include religious institutions
- To be faith-based or faith-inspired organisations
- To prioritise Islamic values
- To be a formalised group- organisation

### **3.5. Functionalities of the platform**

The discussion then moved towards the functionalities of the platform and how members can utilise this tool in achieving the 2030 Agenda, these included:

- Unification of policy positions and advocating an Islamic perspective
- Networking used to enable organisations to collaborate more effectively and share experience and best practice
- Making use of existing resources that members of the platform have acquired including standards and accountability
- Collaboration for capacity building
- Harmonise the experiences of members in order to seek funding
- Harness evidence and research
- Standard and accountability

### **4. Next Steps for the Platform & Conclusion**

The Platform has now completed its third regional consultation. The Platform's Global Steering Group, represented by a participant(s) from every region, selected by the Consultation attendees, will convene a meeting where all discussions are reconciled and a plan of action is drawn up.