

Statement to the closing plenary of the GMGSF, 2013

Peter Denton (The United Church of Canada)

I want to thank the chair for the opportunity to speak to this closing plenary. In the statement for the NGO Major Group earlier this afternoon, the spokesperson reflected on how a diversity of voices is not just an obstacle, but a strength. There can be no more diverse set of voices than those to be found in the global faith community.

If we are to have a sustainable future, these voices need to be present in our civil society discussions. There will never be a common religious perspective on all the facets of sustainability, but there must be agreement on a common practice if we are to have a sustainable global society. That common practice is related to our use of technology.

Technology is a product of our choices. We make choices for reasons, and our reasons reflect our values or what we believe to be important. Religious values are woven into the fabric of every local community in the world, with a history going back into the mists of time.

Faith communities of all kinds are formed and maintained through a consensus about shared values. Because sustainability also requires a consensus about shared values, faith communities therefore could play a significant role in helping local communities make choices toward the future we want.

As the United Nations Environment Program rethinks the nature of civil society participation in its work, I ask UNEP to consider developing a process for accrediting faith communities as another major group. Thank you.

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