



## Message to Youth

From the inaugural session of *Youth PoWR*  
Sydney Baha'i Centre, 107 Derby Street, Silverwater  
17 September 2015

We, young people from diverse religions across Sydney gathered here for the inaugural session of Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions), address the following message to our peers in society.

Meeting and engaging with people of other religions is a transformative and enriching experience. We, as members of Youth PoWR, testify to the way that interfaith dialogue breaks down barriers and stereotypes that have been years in the making. These exchanges have expanded our hearts and minds and, far from our respective faiths being diminished or put at risk, our spirituality has deepened.

We encourage you as our peers in society who are living in a multi-faith, multi-cultural society, to join in the interfaith journey. Make it your own. Show initiative. Encourage your friends to do the same. We are living in a time and place where breaking down barriers between people of different religions is crucial if we are to have a peaceful society to call home in the future. Mutual respect is fundamental for any relationship to flourish, especially among people who profess religious belief. In expressing this respect, sincere and lasting friendship can grow. United we stand! Let's pave the way for a vibrant, respectful, inclusive society in Sydney in 2015 and beyond.

After sharing and refining various ideas about how best to practice and promote embracing diversity among and between the members of different religions, we made the following commitments:

- We will use active listening to have meaningful conversations with people from other faith traditions in order to develop mutual understanding and to discover and build on commonalities. We will acknowledge and respect differences as offering enrichment and colour to society.
- We will learn about others' beliefs and traditions, seeking knowledge from reliable sources, especially from well-informed and truly representative members of those communities, rather than relying on media stereotypes.
- We will visit each other's places of worship to gain greater insight into and appreciation of the sacred spaces, spirituality, beliefs, practices and values of each other's religions.
- We will support and participate in interfaith and multi-faith events such as Youth PoWR and Harmony Day that unite people from diverse traditions.
- We will play our part in eradicating all forms of overt and covert prejudice about particular cultures and religions.

- We will stand up against all forms of negative discrimination whenever and wherever we see or hear it at home, work, school, sporting fields or on social media.
- We will go out of our comfort zones and engage in community-building activities, starting at the grass roots, especially among youth in our local neighbourhoods.
- We will unite in together performing works of mercy in the community, for example, visiting the sick and feeding the homeless, in order to spread in deeds, not just words the message of care and compassion that is common to all our traditions
- We will look for opportunities to create multi-faith groups and societies that practice and promote interfaith relations, particularly at our universities.
- We will acknowledge each other's feast days by learning their meaning and sending greetings.
- We commit to loving all people with an open mind and an open heart, regardless of religious and cultural background, because love sees no barriers.

We invite you to make similar commitments, using or adapting these or coming up with your own, to promote interfaith relations and be part of creating a vibrant, respectful, inclusive multi-faith society.