



## **Inaugural Aotearoa New Zealand National Youth Interfaith Forum 2008**

We the participants of the National Youth Interfaith Forum gathered at the Wellington City Council Chambers on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008 in the spirit of dialogue and friendship.

We were inspired by everyone's commitment to the aims of the forum, which were to promote understanding between different faiths and cultural traditions, challenge ignorance and prejudice, and foster mutual respect.

This year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The forum was an opportunity to reflect on this significant declaration and renew our commitment towards its purpose.

The foundation laid by previous national interfaith dialogues, which were subsequently articulated in the Statement on Religious Diversity, provided the base from which our dialogue could develop.

Summary of discussions:

1. As a group we commit to a continuing process of interfaith dialogue
2. Dialogue is the key to creating a peaceful, diverse society
3. It is crucial to engage in interfaith dialogue with secular society
4. "Interfaith" may also be considered as "inter-worldview".

### **Recommendations and ideas from the forum:**

1. To endorse the Statement on Religious Diversity, and commit to participating in the review of the Statement in 2009
2. To hold a second National Youth Interfaith Forum in 2009, and invite elders/seniors in faith to attend in a supporting role
3. Develop a mission statement and strategy for the youth interfaith forums
4. Create a youth interfaith network
5. Establish regional youth interfaith councils, supported by local government
6. Raise awareness of youth interfaith and intercultural dialogue through exhibitions and festivals
7. Hold panel discussions on religious diversity for the public and private sector
8. Participate in the development of religious diversity education resources for schools, government agencies, and the general public
9. Provide input into legislative changes to reflect the diversity of our communities
10. Provide space for all faiths in our communities
11. Promote an increase in funding for resources to promote religious diversity
12. To continue seeking and learning
13. To be courageous and challenge ourselves to put the spirit of the forum into our daily lives.