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**MESSAGE FROM HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES'S TO  
THE ISE, JAPAN GATHERING**

**TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

**2nd June 2014**

I am delighted to be able to send you my very best wishes on such a special occasion and I warmly welcome your initiative in celebrating “Traditions for the Future.”

The rebuilding of the Ise Shrine in, and for, each generation is a magnificent example of how the best values of the past can inform and shape our future. Using wood grown in your own sacred forest teaches the next generation how to create objects of beauty from the gifts that Nature provides. I do hope that people may learn to appreciate better not only the wisdom of teaching every generation these traditional arts, but also the remarkable beauty of traditional Japanese architecture.

You remind us that while so much environmental literature talks about mankind protecting the forests, it is, of course, the forests that actually protect us! You rightly ask us as human beings to be more modest about our

place in Nature and to return once again to a sense of humanity being a part of Nature rather than apart from Nature.

I believe this is an insight of great significance in a world where we have relegated Nature to the demands of our own species. This is why it is so desperately urgent, and crucial, to protect what is left of our rapidly diminishing, endangered wildlife and vigorously to oppose the illegal wildlife trade. The sheer and awful scale of our destruction of the wonders of God's creation shocks us all and it is so good to see this shock turning into such positive and innovative action.

I am most encouraged to hear that in thinking about the post 2015 world the United Nations has asked the major faiths, along with the Arts, Media, Science and Sports, to think about how different the future could be. Our traditions – religious, cultural, artistic and so forth – have sustained us through crises in the past and will do so again. The world's faiths are the oldest and therefore most sustainable organisations in the world. They have much to teach us about how to manage change; how to ensure that love, compassion and harmony are at the heart of what we do.

When I read the Shinto 'Declaration on the Environment' I was particularly struck by this statement:

*“Shinto suggests that we should shift our point of view and look at our environment with the spirit of reverence and gratitude.”*

I believe this is vital for a better, living planet – without a genuine sense of the sacred nothing is sacred.

In this spirit I can only wish you all the very best for your deliberations in the days ahead and hope that this Gathering will help the wider world to appreciate the unique, crucial and life-changing role faith can have not just for us as individuals, but for the whole of the living planet.