

International Leadership Conference: A Vision for Peacebuilding in the Global Era

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The Universal Peace Federation, in cooperation with Ambassadors for Peace of all nations and faiths, has been involved in peacebuilding throughout the world through interreligious dialogue, consultations on peace and security, initiatives for peace in areas of conflict, peace education, and a multitude of other programs. UPF's peacebuilding principles and practices were presented, and respected statesmen and Ambassadors for Peace gave their perspective on the critical challenges of our time and their vision for bringing effective peacebuilding solutions.



The Programme began with a sense of curiosity and gratitude for each person who has put their confidence in the UPF over the next few days despite their busy schedules. What has drawn each person to this conference? What is their motivation and what do they do that might be in common with our own UPF Team? A man from Pakistan is introduced to others from Pakistan but living here in London. A group from an African nation drop by to meet a journalist who I know will advise them. Someone from Afghanistan is connected to a senior figure from Afghanistan who could inspire him. This and ten more connections are made by the end of the first session.

Keith Best QC, is a former MP and a Barrister. He is also a Director of UK - UPF. He greeted the audience to the UK and the conference itself. He explained that this type of conference was important to improve understanding and give different perspectives that are not available keeping to our own circle of friends and media.

Mr. Umberto Angelucci, Chair, UPF Middle East and North Africa was the moderator. His experience of living in Afghanistan for a number of years during troubled times has provided a bond that he shares with many in the audience. A memorable quote was, 'Afghanistan is like swimming in the desert' he said.

Speakers:

Mr. Jack Corley, Chair, UPF Europe, has great experience sharing UPF's ideals and about UPF's Founders to audiences all over the world. He emphasised that peace is decided by the attitude and motivation of the human heart. He explained the privilege he had to be at the frontline of human history while the Soviet Union collapsed. He continued stating that God is a loving parent who cares for all God's children.

Mr. Jacques Marion, Secretary General, UPF Europe has been focussing on developing UPF Europe for only the last year. He also has wide experience of explaining the principles that underlie UPF in Africa, Russia and China. He emphasised that 'True Love' means altruism or living for the sake of others. He explained that the International Highway Project was a means to develop the world's resources but also to bring wealth and fulfil the talents of all of humanity. Both presenters referred to the Inter-religious Council at the United Nations that Father Moon had initiated. If the UN does not pay attention to religious influences it is like a body without a conscience.

Commentators:

Prof. J. Martin Ramirez, Chair, Centre for Conflict Studies, Nebrija University, Spain comments that human beings are not naturally predisposed to violence. Prof. Ramirez was a participant in conferences run by UPF's predecessors in the 1980's.

Hon. Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Vice President, Institute for Cultural Diplomacy; former Speaker of the Luxembourg Parliament

Amb. Robert Vandemeulebroucke, Ambassador (Ret.), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium

Opening Banquet:

Moderators: Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, Vice President, Women's Federation for World Peace International / Mr. Robin Marsh, Secretary General, UPF United Kingdom.

Edwin Shuker, a leading member of the Jewish community in the UK, Vice President of the European Jewish Council and the World Sephardic Council, spoke of the need for greater freedom with more order and less tranny that usually comes with greater order. He felt this was the challenge facing the conference deliberations.



Invocation:

Rev. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, President, World Congress of Faiths

Sheikh Dr. Hojjat Ramzy, Executive Member, Muslim Council of Britain



Welcoming Remarks: Dr. Thomas Walsh, International President, Universal Peace Federation, described the role that UPF and the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace should perform to make an impact on the world that is currently very troubled.



Baroness Sandip Verma has been a member of the British Government for the last 10 years in different areas of responsibility. She has been a champion for women's rights and the prevention of violence against women. She said she was grateful for the good work of UPF to gather people of all backgrounds, races and cultures. She wanted to see more women leaders in order that there would be a more peaceful world.

H.E. Alfred Moisiu, President of Albania (2002-2007) gave the final remarks of the evening.