

UPF Canada hosts Ambassadors for Peace at a monthly breakfast

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Montreal, Canada -- On January 16th, UPF hosted 28 guests, including two municipal councilors, four representatives of interfaith organizations and numerous Ambassadors for Peace at a monthly breakfast. This was an opportunity to report on the October 31, 2017, launch of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on the theme of "Reaching Indigenous Youth." The meeting was conducted in French.

An overview of the event was presented by Franco Famularo, president of UPF-Canada, followed by a summary given by Marc Laurin, rapporteur, of the contents of the panelists who spoke of the historic and current sufferings of families and particularly youth in many Indigenous communities throughout Canada. The tragic and deplorable history of the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in what is now known as Canada is being taken very seriously by the current Canadian government as it seeks to address historical and current wrongs.

Our guest speaker at the January breakfast, Marie-Josée Parent, the first Indigenous person elected to the City Council of Montreal, echoed this awareness in her presentation, "The Situation of Indigenous People in Quebec." She made a historical review of the situation of indigenous peoples at the time of European colonization, the clash of cultures that led to many conflicts until the Great Peace of Montreal in 1701 between France and the 39 First Nations and later, in 1876, the Indian Act, permitting the Canadian government to carry out a systematic policy of "assimilation or extermination" by establishing residential schools that would remove 150,000 Indigenous children from their homes in an attempt to erase their culture.

The scars of this cultural genocide are still very present today. In 2009, the Canadian government created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which presented in its final report 94 recommendations towards rebuilding the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the rest of Canadian society. Occasions such as this, in which a much-neglected area of our history is brought to light, are a type of public educational effort through which UPF members can meaningfully contribute to the good of society.

In recent months, we have explored different dimensions of living together in Quebec. We are currently preparing a forum that will summarize living together in all its dimensions.