

## IAPD Inaugurated at National Pedagogical Drahomanov University Kviv, Ukraine

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October 19, 2018



Kviv, Ukraine -- The Ukrainian chapter of Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) was inaugurated during a conference titled "Toward Interdependence and Mutual Prosperity: The Role of Public, Youth and Spiritual Leaders."

More than 300 people attended the conference, which was held on October 19, 2018, in the assembly hall of the National Pedagogical Drahomanov University. The event was organized jointly by UPF-Ukraine and the Ukrainian Peace Council.

Folk-pop singer Ruslana Lotsman, an Honored Artist of Ukraine, opened the conference with the national anthem.

Volodymyr Novokhatsky of the Kyiv Prosecutor's Office, who is the deputy head of the Ukrainian Peace Council, conveyed congratulations to the conference participants from the first president of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk. Then Jack Corley, the regional chair of UPF for Eastern Europe, greeted the audience. Having just received a book of President Kravchuk as a gift, Mr. Corley promised to study Ukrainian.

Dr. Michael Balcomb, the regional chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, reported on the recent Peace Road tour of seven nations in the Balkan Peninsula. Most of these nations were part of the former Yugoslavia. After the brutal fighting of the 1990s, the smoldering conflict has continued, as different religions and ethnic groups coexist on the peninsula. The international peacebuilding project that started this year has proved to be promising, Dr. Balcomb said.

Rev. Dr. Igor Onyshchuk, an archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and a doctor of law, spoke about the role of religious leaders in achieving peace and harmony. In particular, he outlined the five principles of peace of Pope John Paul II. Dr. Onyshchuk was awarded an Ambassador for Peace certificate this time. Also nine prominent Ukrainian women were awarded this honorary title.

Korean Youth Ambassador for Peace Bok Jin Chung spoke about the role of Ukrainian youth and amazed

everybody with his almost perfect command of the Ukrainian language.



Tetyana Fedunova, head of the Kyiv City School Principals Association, gave a report on her peacebuilding activities in the past year as part of a special ceremony. The main role of this peace ceremony was played by her students who are Junior Ambassadors for Peace. They mixed in one vessel the spring water brought by Ambassadors for Peace from the north, east, south and west of Ukraine.

After closing, the conference participants signed a proclamation of the founding of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development in Ukraine as a new initiative of UPF. Finally participants had a pleasant conversation with each other during a buffet in the university's dining room.

Guests stated that they enjoyed the conference because the speeches were short and straight to the point. Everybody was touched by the song *The World Without War*, performed by students dressed in various national costumes. All present could see with their own eyes that a true culture of peace is forming in Ukraine.

