

International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace Launched in Tuvalu

Santosh Neupane
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Funafuti, Tuvalu—The International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace was inaugurated in the tiny Pacific island nation of Tuvalu.

The overall theme of the inauguration, which was held in the Funafuti Lagoon Hotel on November 6, 2017, was “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of IAPP in Tuvalu.”

Tuvalu is composed of several beautiful coral atolls, formerly known as the Ellice Islands. It has a mainly Polynesian population of around 10,000. It is located in the Pacific Ocean, close to the equator, north of Fiji and east of the Solomon Islands.

On October 31, 2017, Santosh Neupane, the president of UPF-Fiji, arrived in Funafuti, the capital of Tuvalu. He first met with Rev. Dr. Kitiona Tausi, a prominent religious leader and the newly appointed president of UPF of Tuvalu.

Over the course of the next week Mr. Neupane and Dr. Tausi met with the prime minister, the governor general, former prime ministers, the speaker of the House of Parliament, and other prominent leaders to invite them to the upcoming inauguration of IAPP.

The November 6 program began at 6 p.m. with a welcome from Dr. Tausi, acting as the master of ceremonies. There was a beautiful opening prayer from Rev. Tofinga Falani, the vice president of Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu, the main Christian church in Tuvalu. This was followed by an introduction to UPF and IAPP with its worldwide network of parliamentarians.

Greg Stone, the secretary general of UPF for the Oceania region, gave presentations on “Family Values and World Peace” and “The Need to Educate for Character.” This was followed by the official launch of IAPP Tuvalu, signified by the reading out of the Inaugural Resolution and its signing by all the participants.

Ambassador for Peace certificates were presented to Hon. Samuelu P. Teo, a member of Parliament; Mr. Matanilee Iosefa, a prominent businessman; and Dr. Tausi.

Mr. Neupane put forward the nomination of Hon. Teo to be the first president of IAPP Tuvalu, and it was supported unanimously by all present.

Hon. Teo gave his acceptance speech on the theme “The Critical Issues Facing Tuvalu.” He highlighted the decline of youth morality and respect for elders together with the increasing secularization of education, with its lack of focus on character development and youth morality. He also spoke about the

high rate of youth unemployment in Tuvalu—currently around 40 percent. Particularly on the main island of Funafuti, often as many as 10 people live in a small dwelling with only one breadwinner.

This was followed by an inspiring presentation by Mr. Neupane on the topic “The Role of Purity, Morality and the New Leadership Paradigm: An Alternative Way of Nation Building.” He emphasized filial piety as the foundational virtue that is necessary for building peace and prosperity in the nation. He also outlined the first major project of IAPP in Tuvalu, which is to bring two martial arts instructors to teach Tong Il Moo Do, which focuses on teaching and practice of filial piety.



The evening finished with dinner and informal discussion. There was a feeling that everyone was very impressed by the presentations. Many people gave their commitment to support this exciting new initiative.

The IAPP Inauguration was attended by 21 prominent Tuvaluans, including three national-level pastors, one member of parliament, one former prime minister, one former parliamentarian, Ambassadors for Peace, and business and government leaders, including the CEO of the Tuvalu Development Bank.

Footnote: There are fifteen members of parliament in the Tuvalu Parliament. At the time of the IAPP launch, the prime minister and a majority of parliamentarians were in Bonn, Germany, attending the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23).

