

## UPF-Pakistan's Seventh National Youth Peace Festival in Islamabad

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September 28, 2016



Islamabad, Pakistan -- The 7th National Youth Peace Festival: "Youth for Peace and Countering Violent Extremism" was held at the National Library of Pakistan and the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services in the country's capital of Islamabad from September 27 to 30, 2016. The conference was organized by the Chanan Development Association, a youth-led nonprofit, in cooperation with UPF, the Young Parliamentarians Forum Pakistan and 17 other civil society organizations as well as government departments.

More than 500 young people from across Pakistan attended the event, which is held every year in the month of September to commemorate the UN International Day of Democracy (September 15) and International Day of Peace (September 21) and provide Pakistani youth a platform to discuss the country's challenges towards achieving peace and harmony and advocate for meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes.



The opening program took place on September 28 and featured four speakers. H.E. Mr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, minister of state for federal education, professional training, and interior was the chief guest.



Welcoming remarks were given by Hon. Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan.

Mr. Haseeb Mohtashami, country representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Pakistan, said all Pakistani youth should stand for a better world. Women especially should be at the forefront of this.

Chair of UPF-Nepal, Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, a former minister and MP of Nepal, was the keynote speaker. He said increasing individualism and immorality among young people, and all people, are harming our future. Many young people are falling into drugs, free sex, extremism, terrorism and harmful lifestyles -- and solutions to these issues must be found. Young people who lead these lifestyles are damaging their future, and these issues cost a large amount of taxpayer resources, as well as threaten human peace and security.

Mr. Baligh ur Rehman said that many terrorists and ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) say they fight in the name of Islam, but they are not Muslim; Muslims are not terrorists. He added that Pakistan is on the side of peace.

