

UPF International: The United Nations at 80 - A Partner for Peace and Sustainable Development

Tageldin Hamad
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The United Nations was founded in 1945 in the aftermath of the Second World War, when representatives of 50 nations met in San Francisco to draft and sign the UN Charter. The Charter was officially signed on June 26, 1945, and entered into force on October 24, 1945.

From its inception, the UN was established to promote a set of universal values: peace and security, self-determination of peoples, social progress and development, and human dignity. In the preamble to the Charter, its founders pledged, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to uphold human rights and justice, and to advance living standards for all."

Since 1945, the UN has achieved many milestones in pursuit of these goals. In December 1948, the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaiming the inalienable rights to which every human being is entitled. From its first peacekeeping mission in 1948 (UNTSO in the Middle East) to the present day, the UN has deployed peacekeepers around the world to stabilize conflicts and protect civilians.

Alongside peacekeeping, the UN established specialized agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNHCR, which have alleviated poverty, improved global health, advanced education, and protected vulnerable populations across the world. Over the past 80 years, more than one million personnel from over 125 countries have served in 71 UN peacekeeping operations, with 11 missions currently active.

In recent decades, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals have united countries around shared objectives ending poverty, protecting the environment, achieving gender equality, and more. The Universal Peace Federation explicitly supports and promotes these goals as part of its mission. Through treaties on climate change, non-proliferation, health, and humanitarian aid, the UN continues to provide vital platforms for cooperation on the world's most urgent challenges.

Diplomacy Across Ideological Divides

This historical foundation provides the backdrop for organizations such as the Universal Peace Federation, which build upon and align with the UN's mission.

Dr. Hak Ja Han and her late husband, Dr. Sun Myung Moon, founders of the UPF, have long supported the UN's vision of peace and cooperation. In April 1990, they traveled to the USSR and met President Mikhail Gorbachev during a World Media Conference in Moscow organized by them. In March 1994, they hosted former President Gorbachev in Seoul, honoring his role in advancing political reforms that contributed to the end of the Cold War.

In 1991, the founders visited North Korea, where they were received by Chairman Kim Il Sung. Their dialogue helped pave the way for inter-Korean humanitarian initiatives, including economic cooperation agreements and family reunions. These efforts exemplified their commitment to dialogue and

reconciliation across ideological divides.

In 2000, Dr. Sun Myung Moon spoke at the UN and proposed the creation of an Interreligious Council within the UN system, explaining that world peace can be fully accomplished only when the wisdom and efforts of the world's religious leaders work cooperatively with national leaders. Dr. Hak Ja Han has also addressed the UN, continuing this leadership and calling for a global moral and spiritual awakening to support lasting peace.

Looking Ahead: Partnership for Sustainable Peace

Today, the Universal Peace Federation continues this legacy through events, projects, and campaigns that align with the objectives of the UN Charter and the Pact for the Future, adopted by UN Member States on September 22, 2024.

Thousands of UPF's Ambassadors for Peace, along with religious, political, and civic leaders worldwide, regularly participate in UN observances and international conferences on peace and development, organized by UPF worldwide.

UPF's general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council embodies this enduring partnership. In accordance with its charter, UPF supports and promotes the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. We will continue to bring leaders from diverse sectors to UN forums to strengthen the culture of peace.

Through our peace education, family strengthening, and development initiatives, UPF will remain aligned with UN priorities contributing moral, spiritual, and interfaith perspectives that complement and reinforce the political and humanitarian work of the United Nations.