

UPF partnered with African Union in celebrating the 55th Africa Day in New York

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New York, United States -- The Universal Peace Federation partnered with the African Union in celebrating the 55th Africa Day.

The approximately 600 guests at the May 25, 2018, event at the Manhattan Center included ambassadors, UN officials, CEOs, dignitaries and celebrities.

Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the 1963 founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), presently recognized as the African Union. The African Union has brought together its 54 member states to collectively address challenges such as armed conflict, climate change and poverty.

The theme of Africa Day 2018 was "Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation."

Over the past 20 years, Africa has seen progress on women's representation, poverty reduction, equal pay for equal work, and access to education and basic services.

Special remarks on the significance of Africa Day 2018 and the progress of Africa toward a dynamic, progressive and developing continent were given by H.E. Ambassador Valentine Rugwabiza, permanent representative of Rwanda to the United Nations, representing the chair of the African Union; H.E. Professor Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, permanent representative of Nigeria to the UN; H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, the Slovak minister of foreign affairs who is also the president of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly; H.E. Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed, permanent observer of the African Union Mission to the UN; Dr. Tageldin Hamad, vice president of UPF; H.E. Ms. Bience Gawanas,

special adviser on Africa for the United Nations; Mme. Yamille Luque Rocha, a representative of the United Nations African Ambassadors' Spouses Group (UNAASG); and H.E. Lindiwe Nonceba Sisulu, minister of international relations and cooperation of South Africa.



In particular, General Assembly President Mr. Miroslav Lajčák pointed out that we all have a lot to learn from Africa, as African mediators are usually the first to the table when tensions are high on the continent. They are first on the scene when conflict hits and see the things that others don't see, he said. Although conflict prevention has been made a priority at the UN, the African Union has turned this priority into action more quickly, he said. Through its Agenda 2063, the African Union has set out a clear vision for development and also has been a major player in implementing the United Nations' global Sustainable Development Goals. Mr. Lajčák therefore mentioned that the future looks bright for Africa, especially when it comes to partnership and cooperation.

In addition to the speakers, the celebration presented the diversity of the African continent's cultures and cuisines. There was also a special recognition of the 100th birthday of Nelson Mandela.

Performing artists shared the dynamic richness of African music and dance, in particular multi-awarded South African superstar Ms. Judith Sephuma. The United Nations African Ambassadors' Spouses Group provided a variety of African delicacies from all the regions of Africa. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the best of Africa to a high-level audience of decisionmakers and leaders from all sectors who know and love Africa.