

UPF Netherlands Commemorates Human Rights Day - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Willem Koetsier
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The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) - Netherlands sponsored the conference on the theme of "Freedom, Equality and Justice for All" to mark the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

MC Mrs. Anna Becker-Yap, president, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in The Netherlands, an organisation affiliated with UPF, commenced the event by highlighting that the Declaration of Human Rights, established 75 years ago, stands as one of the most revolutionary global commitments in the world, as articulated on the UN website.



The program continued by featuring a video about the Human Rights Day 2023, sourced from the United Nations website. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

In his introductory speech, Dr Willem Koetsier, secretary general, UPF-The Netherlands, highlighted the current trend where many individuals and groups assert their rights without a corresponding emphasis on duties and responsibilities. Government officials, politicians and legal experts have formulated many rights. He underscored the imbalance, however, on the side of duties and responsibilities, urging a more thoughtful approach that considers the necessary growth period to make rights substantial. Mr Koetsier suggested moving beyond hasty legislation by forming interdisciplinary policy groups for in-depth research on complex issues, particularly citing climate change.

Emphasizing a balanced framework for human rights, he advocated for laws and regulations that facilitate the flow of divine love, promoting a harmonious society. The philosophy of UPF centers on using laws and rights as tools to realize God's love, fostering a community where people prioritize the well-being of others. He also stressed the importance of reflecting on one's contributions to family, community, and

society before asserting rights, asserting that this approach is vital for achieving freedom, equality, and justice for all.

Next, keynote speaker, Mr Jacques Marion, co-chair, UPF Europe and Middle East, spoke about "A Vision for the Future of Human Rights".



He referred to Eleanor Roosevelt, a key contributor to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), who described the UDHR as a global Magna Carta for all of humanity.

Mr Marion said that 3 generations of human rights can be distinguished: The right of freedom of religion, conscience and thought; the right of social and economic freedom; and collective human rights (not in UDHR).

Renowned human rights activist, Dr. Aaron Rhodes, has written about controversies concerning human rights for special groups, especially where these create conflicts and promote a culture of irresponsibility and victimization.



The foundation of human rights can be found in the dignity and value of human beings, described and shared by the world religions and cultures. But also in natural law, the Enlightenment and Reformation. Besides rights, duties are important. French philosopher, Jacques Maritain, sees natural law also as a source of duties, obligations and responsibilities towards communities. Gandhi stated: "Rights that can be deserved and preserved come from well-done duty."

In a speech at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, November 2014, Pope Francis spoke about a tendency nowadays, that individual rights are claimed without regard of those of others and the common good of society. He also referred to Raphael's fresco, where Plato points his finger upwards and Aristotle stretches his hand in front of him. According to the Pope we need to re-establish the vital link between the vertical aspect (God, spirit) and the horizontal aspect (human society, body).

Nelson Mandela, who is known for his pursuit of freedom, said: "Freedom implies responsibility" and

"The truth is that we are not yet free, we have merely achieved the freedom to be free, the right not to be oppressed. For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

In contemplating the future of human rights, Mr Marion referenced UPF Founder, Dr Moon, who envisioned an upcoming era where humanity sheds its fallen nature, returns to its original self, and progresses towards a world where people unite as one family under God. This envisioned world, characterized by heart as the source of true love, embodies a harmonious balance between the purpose of the whole (mind) and the purpose of the individual (body). The intellectual facet of heart is represented by truth, the will by goodness, and the emotional aspect by beauty. In this vision, the family serves as a nurturing ground for love and ethics, with parental love exemplifying the epitome of selfless affection.



The source of freedom, according to the speaker, is not so much reason but heart, centred on God. In contemporary liberal democracies, the original concept of equality before God has shifted to equality before the law. The former emphasizes a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood among people as objects to God, while the latter places individuals in a subject position, leading to conflicts over rights.

Mr Marion advocates for a revival of equality before God, stressing the importance of responsibility and original object consciousness. God, in this context, serves as the source of common goodness, love equality, good character, and a sound conscience. In line with this perspective, Dr Moon proposed the establishment of an Interreligious Council at the United Nations in August 2000, envisioned to act as a conscience for the UN.



The future world should be rooted in a culture of heart, true love, and a commitment to living for the sake of others, as is reflected in UPF's philosophy of Universal Values, Interdependence, and Mutual Prosperity. In this envisioned world, humanity fulfils the three blessings bestowed by God: to become mature physically and spiritually, form families dedicated to goodness and community service, and use the God-given creativity to live in balance with the environment.