

UPF Argentina: Officials and Civic Groups Unite to Plant Trees in Buenos Aires

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Buenos Aires, Argentina – City government officials joined legislators, diplomats, religious leaders, and representatives of traditional and other civil society groups in planting 30 trees along the Río de La Plata near the Columbus Monument in Costanera Norte on October 16, 2024. The event was held to mark the Day of Respect for Cultural Diversity, also known in some countries as Columbus Day.

Around one hundred participants joined the event, which was organized by A Path Towards Peace Foundation, the World Congress on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue, UPF-Argentina, Buenos Aires' undersecretary of citizen culture and human rights, and Comuna 14, an administrative district of the city.



Welcoming remarks were given by Peace Ambassador **Mr. Daniel Lew**, president of A Path Towards

Peace Foundation and a major organizer of the initiative. Following the national anthem, Argentina's Federal Police Band performed part of "Ode to Joy," the renowned song of universal fraternity.

Then, brief speeches were given by Undersecretary **Ms. Pamela Malewicz** and **Mr. Gustavo Guillerme**, president of A Path Towards Peace World Congress on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue. They mentioned the National Day of Respect for Cultural Diversity and the importance of joint efforts to plant more trees.



"There is no 'way to peace,' there is only 'peace,'" said UPF-Argentina President **Mr. Miguel Werner**, quoting Mahatma Gandhi. "I hope we can expand in each of our areas and organizations ... restoring peace with the Creation, our common house; and among us, with people of diverse cultures, religions and organizations, that are now gathered for such a good action; and with the Creator."



Prominent participants included Buenos Aires city legislators **Ms. Jessica Barreto** and **Ms. Silvia Imas**; director of Buenos Aires City Legislature's Environment Commission **Mr. Federico Glustein**; coordinator of special projects for the undersecretary of citizen culture and human rights **Ms. Mercedes Barbara**; president of Comuna 14 **Mr. Martín Cantera**; and ambassadors and diplomatic representatives of Costa Rica, Armenia, Georgia, Serbia, El Salvador, United Arab Emirates, Slovakia, United States, Greece, Mexico, Paraguay, and the European Union.



Also present were former legislator **Ms. Carolina Estebarena**, general director of planning for the Airport Security Police; **Ms. Ariel Blufstein**, in charge of diplomatic relations for DAIA; **Ms. Patricia Pitaluga**, president of Acercando Naciones; and other directors of civil society organizations, as well as representatives of the Spanish, Lebanese, Peruvian, Venezuelan, and Colombian communities, and traditional Jujuy and Salta groups in their traditional attire.

Other representatives participated from the Buenos Aires Archdiocese Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue Committee, AMIA's Jewish community, Argentina's Islamic Center, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Scientology, the Apostolic Christian Church, Afro-Umbanda community (ASRAU), and the Unificationist community.



After a group photograph, all participants joined to plant 30 willow trees, as a testimony of peaceful coexistence and commitment to a sustainable future. A proposal was also made to conduct new peace projects near Río de La Plata and the Jorge Newbery International Airport.

In a society faced with many conflicts and an uncertain world with ongoing wars, peace is best expressed as tangible action for the common good, to facilitate harmony among peoples and cultures, who have a common destiny on a shared planet.