

UPF Kyiv, Ukraine's Interreligious and Cultural Harmony Conference

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Kyiv, Ukraine -- UPF-Ukraine, in cooperation with the Open International University of Human Development "Ukraine" and the Islamic Cultural Center "Alraid," held an international online conference titled "Interreligious and Cultural Harmony."

Speakers at the conference on February 13, 2021, which was dedicated to the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, considered the cultural features of different religious denominations, the role and importance of religion in modern cultural and civilizational cooperation, spiritual and moral values in the modern world, and the education of youth. UPF Ambassadors for Peace, scientists, public figures, youth and students from six countries attended the webinar.



In her welcoming address Professor Hanna Davydenko, the vice rector for international relations of University "Ukraine," said: "This conference is a great opportunity for all of us to rethink the important role of religious institutions in creating, preserving and restoring peace, spiritual and moral principles and values, and the harmonious and peaceful development of modern society."

Jack Corley, the UPF president for Eastern Europe, spoke about the establishment of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), a UPF constituent association, in 2018 in South Korea. Mr. Corley noted that the IAPD encourages faith representatives, civic activists, government officials and

educators to promote intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation between religions, NGOs, civil society and government.

Speaking on behalf of the Islamic Cultural Center "Alraid," Sheikh Tariq Sarkhan emphasized the importance of understanding each other: "We are afraid of those we do not know, we shun those we are afraid of, and we are in conflict with those we hate."



Short introductions to a number of nations and religions were given. Arisa Tajima spoke about Japan and Shintoism, and Wanjin Yu spoke about South Korea and Buddhism. Manisha Saroha and Lillia Aliekseichuk (a Youth Ambassador for Peace) described the culture and religion of India. Rahaf Nabil Hajar, a UPF volunteer, told about the Muslim holidays in Syria.

Inna Yeung, head of the Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature, Foreign Languages and Translation at University "Ukraine," spoke about the religion and culture of Hong Kong.

Ambassador for Peace Boris Afanasyev, a retired diplomat and professor, described religious events he had encountered while working at the United Nations. He called on the conference participants to respect people of different cultures and religions, and he spoke of an international conference that he proposed to hold in 2021 titled "Peace and Harmonious Interfaith Relations."

The conference ended with sincere wishes of peace and success in further work to promote interreligious understanding and consensus.

