

UPF France Seminar Explores How Values Shape a Culture of Peace

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Paris, France – On September 21, 2024, UPF-France celebrated the UN International Day of Peace with a seminar on “Values and the Culture of Peace,” held at the Espace Barrault, UPF headquarters in Paris. The theme followed the UN's recommendation for this year's celebration: “Cultivating a Culture of Peace.” Indeed, 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 1999.

Forty participants attended the event, including ambassadors for peace and NGO representatives. Some twenty people followed the event online. **Mr. Patrick Jouan**, vice president of UPF-France, opened the program, which comprised three sessions.



The first session was “Culture of Peace, Culture of Heart.” **Mr. Jacques Marion**, president of UPF-France, described the erosion of spiritual values in today's world, and the lack of rootedness of humanitarian ideals. Outlining a new perspective on values, centered on heart and love, he stressed the need for a transcendent vision of the human being, common to all religions.

Love, he said, is the source of truth, goodness and beauty, but also their culmination. A culture of peace is therefore first and foremost a culture of heart, centered on family ethics. This perspective, he concluded, helps us to reassess modernity.



UPF research fellow **Dr. Laurent Ladouce** then gave a presentation on “Aesthetics and Ethics in the Service of Peace.” To train us to lead a fundamentally peaceful daily life, education must awaken us to right feelings, right thoughts, and right deeds, he said. This is the key to a fulfilling and happy life.



H.E. Doudou Diène, former UN special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination, and former director of UNESCO's “Roads of Dialogue” project, opened the afternoon session. He spoke of three facets of culture: the aesthetic, the ethical and the spiritual, which structure the tension between identity, otherness and universality.

Aesthetics – visible, tangible forms and expressions – is the initial stage of cultural perception, he said. Ethics is the search for the deep human values of the peoples who created these cultural forms and expressions. The spiritual is the in-depth knowledge of their beliefs and transcendences, the source of inspiration for their cultural expressions, he explained.

Dr. Ladouce then led a workshop aimed at drafting a manifesto on “Values in the Service of Peace,” with contributions from the audience.

In the atmosphere of conflict surrounding our lives, within society or between ethnic groups and nations, this effort to define the values of a culture of peace opened a window on a promising future, and provided a welcome breath of fresh air.