

UPF and ISCP Africa: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values

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Africa -- On July 4, 2020, UPF-Africa and the Africa chapter of the International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP) held a "Peace Talks" webinar titled "Rebuilding and Renewing Our Nations in the Post-Covid 19 World: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values." This web conference was the third in Africa's series of "Peace Talks" conferences organized by UPF as part of its policy contributions to the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. The web conference attracted about 1,440 participants who connected live from all over the world and over 2 million others who viewed it on two television channels in Sierra Leone.

The conference was chaired by H.E. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, president (2010–2015) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and chairman of the African branch of the International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP). Speakers included H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, current president of the Republic of Kenya; H.E. Dr. Julius Maada Bio, current president of the Republic of Sierra Leone; H.E. Dr. Catherine Samba-Panza, president (2014–2016) of the Central African Republic; and H.E. Hery Rajaonarimampianina, president (2014–2018) of Madagascar. All presidents are leaders of major peacebuilding efforts on the African continent. [note: H.E. Bio was not able to participate but arranged for the conference to be carried live on television in Sierra Leone.]



Dr. Thomas Walsh, chair of UPF International, said in his welcome to participants that the webinar on the urgent topic of the pandemic is a timely one as the world is growing in its appreciation and respect for the African continent, "a shining star of our planet." He turned the program over to the emcee, Mr. Adama Doumbia, secretary general for UPF-Africa, who noted that the Chat line was ablaze with questions and comments.

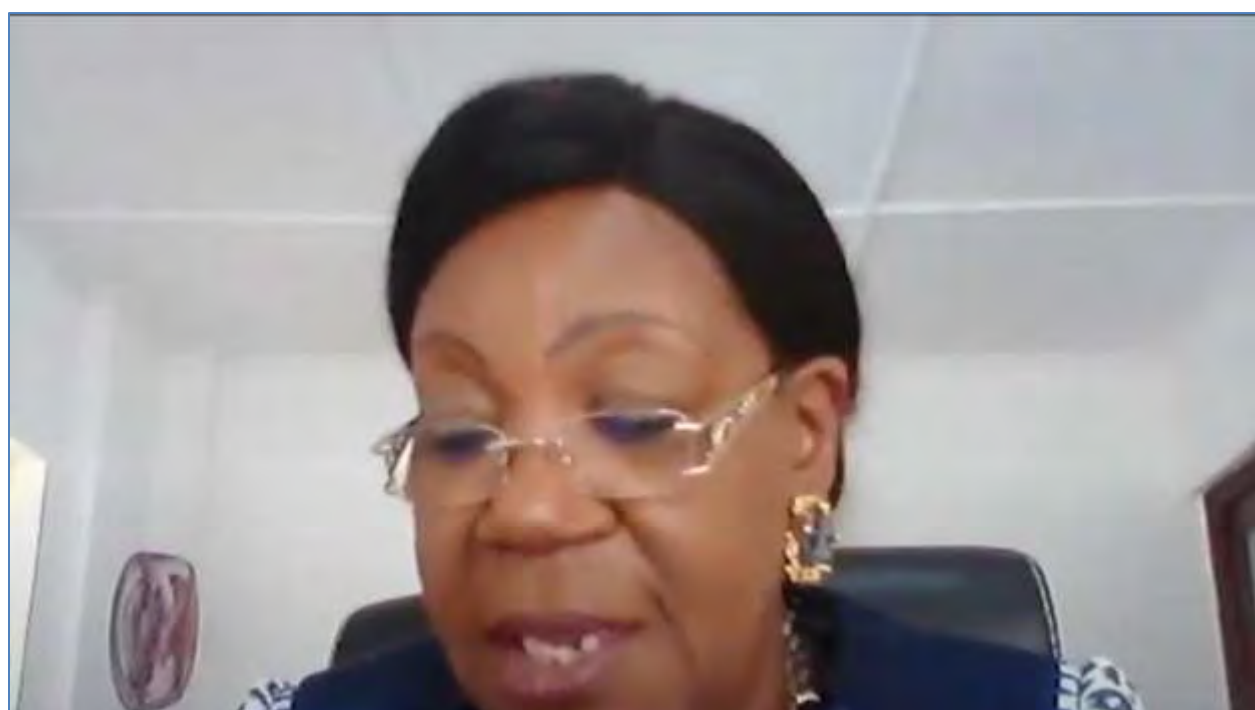
[H.E. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan](#) (President of Nigeria, 2010–2015) set the stage in his opening remarks, congratulating the African Union for its leadership in the fight against Covid-19. He stated that the prominent role played by Africa Centre for Disease Control, the Africa Covid-19 Fund and the joint

Africa procurement platform in Covid-19 response demonstrated the continent's potential to overcome its development challenges going forward. These challenges he enumerated as, among others, managing governance structures and democratic processes, reducing conflict, creating jobs for the almost 200 million young people ages 15-24 throughout the continent, increasing regional trade, and attracting foreign investment.



Following H.E. Jonathan was the heartfelt presentation of H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta (President of Kenya). First, President Kenyatta commended Africa's concerted response to Covid-19, saying that measures being implemented by African countries are helping slow down the spread of the virus and that despite limited resources, the continent had rolled out proactive measures that were helping save lives. He stated, "Africa has responded to Covid-19 much better than many other parts of the world, particularly when you consider its relatively weaker resource base." He continued, "For a continent with 1.2 billion people, we have about 400,000 confirmed cases and just over 10,000 deaths. For comparison, that is about 15% of the cases in the United States and 7% of U.S. deaths." He pointed out that "Africans were proud to have a son of Africa leading the global fight against Covid-19 in the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus."

President Kenyatta added, "African nations collaborated together through the Africa Union to negotiate for Personnel Protective Equipment PPE, at preferential rates." But he warned against complacency in Africa's Covid-19 response, saying that the pandemic is likely to get worse in coming months.



Peer learning, data driven decision making, pragmatism and regular and transparent communication are some of the best practices that will help Africa stand in a better position to defeat coronavirus and other future viruses, he explained.

Using the example of Kenya, the president further added that "religious leaders are key actors in containing the spread of Covid-19. Religious institutions provide critical outreach to vulnerable communities and have an extensive network of faith-based health and education infrastructures that are critical to Covid-19 response. I am working hand in hand with religious organizations who are influential voices in shaping personal and community responses to Covid-19."



Going forward, the president urged African leaders to continue working together, with the support of partners, in crafting interventions that enhance resilience of the continent's vulnerable populations. "We should work in collaboration with our development partners to build capacity for local production of health equipment, and to strengthen our local manufacturing capacity more generally."

He concluded, "There is a need to create a network of people of goodwill all over Africa and to support young people. After all, they are the future." He called "for more action to address climate change post Covid-19, if we are to build a resilient Africa."

[H.E. Catherine Samba-Panza](#) (President of the Central African Republic, 2014-2016) offered an eloquent summary of some of the effects of Covid-19: "Wherever we may find ourselves, whether we are male or female, we have rediscovered and been awoken, due to the pandemic, to the fact that we are all human beings. The various responses put forward to flatten the curve of the pandemic bear witness to the strength of the instinct of survival that is within individuals and communities when faced with danger." She observed, "We are all aware that the Covid-19 crisis has shaken the world, a world that is underpinned by the concept of globalization. However, the different lockdown measures taken here and there for diverse reasons, including economic reasons, demonstrate that the global economy gives pride of place to profit, at the detriment of the well-being of populations."

Interdependence was a major theme of the presentation by [H.E Hery Rajaonarimampianina](#) (President of Madagascar, 2014–2018). This interdependence, he said, "also inevitably affects systemic organizations such as the United Nations and the African Union because they have the macroscopic, global, holistic vision that facilitates interactions and feedback loops. There is a need to reconsider the role and philosophy of their dismemberments. I am thinking in particular of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WTO."

As a chartered public accountant and former minister of finance, the former president, was in a unique position to offer many specific ideas for the future. (Please see linked speech for more details.) He struck a different note for his conclusion, however:

To conclude, I would like to draw your attention to a paramount and distinctive component of human beings: the human spirit. Spiritual and family dimensions are insufficiently taken into account in decisions or in the great turning points of humanity, such as the one we are experiencing. I have never been oblivious of this: I am a Christian educator and deeply concerned about this. In my vision of the world, I see the spiritual dimension as inseparable from the secular aspects. I am also aware that trials are inherent in the life and enlightenment of human beings and of humanity.

This pandemic has demonstrated the limits of humankind in this century of blossoming scientific and technological knowledge and financial power. Social initiatives should no longer be considered as social,

charitable or philanthropic acts but should be part of citizen and public commitments, both individual and collective.



QandA Followed: H.E. Kenyatta encouraged a deepening of the dialogue and understanding among Africans. Africa must come together to negotiate for its common interests, he said; Africa's young demographic, if leveraged properly, can be a significant source of economic power. The African Union's response to the crisis, he observed, shows that coordination among African countries significantly reduces the cost of addressing shared problems. H.E. Kenyatta further called for collaboration across borders by experts from different nations. H.E. Samba-Panza emphasized the particular role played by women in fighting the pandemic. H.E. Jonathan pointed to the International Summit Council for Peace as a potential resource for future African Union efforts.

In addition, the following recommendations were offered in the Chat line:

Each African country should establish a ministry or commission that reports to the president on peacemaking, peace building and sustaining peace.

All African countries should have special programs that address poverty and joblessness, especially regarding the young population.

Africa is very rich with human and other resources, and strategies for their effective and timely utilization should be explored.

Good governance and social justice as well as abuse and misuse of resources must be addressed.

Health, education, and agriculture should be prioritized as well as reshaping our economy and trade.

At the program's conclusion, Mrs. Katherine Rigney, Chair of UPF-Africa, thanked the participants on behalf of UPF Founder Hak Ja Han Moon. Dr. Moon, she said, is committed to a world of peace and harmony for all and is promoting peace leadership based on the feminine aspect of human nature.