

Benefits of Family Values Considered at Russian Conference

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Moscow, Russia—UPF-Russia held a conference on "Family Values as the Basis for Stability and Prosperity in Russian Society."

The program, which was organized in partnership with the Russian chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization, took place on December 19, 2015.

The event included a plenary session with presentations by experts as well as roundtable discussions.

For the audience, it was extremely important not only to express their views on such a timely domestic topic but also to find potential links between the state and public institutions that promote complete and traditional families and contribute to finding a solution to demographic problems.

Master of ceremonies Dmitry Samko, the secretary general of UPF's Moscow chapter, said that now while humanity is closely following dramatic events in the international arena, we should not neglect the most important thing — the family and its moral challenges. The family, whose structure until recent times was deemed unshakable, now is being tested for durability, he said.

Vladimir Frolov, an Honored Artist of Russia and a former deputy of the State Duma, welcomed the participants. He emphasized the importance of culture for the preservation of traditional values. He expressed his hope that the past Year of Literature, on the one hand, showed positive trends. On the other hand, he said, it aggravated a number of pressing problems which we still have to address with the utmost seriousness and determination.



The head of international programs at the Federation for Peace and Accord, Marina Pilschikova, spoke about the tremendous work carried out in Moscow within the schedule of various festivals, including international, in which the target audience was families. The fact that people in general do not know much about these programs, as well as the work carried out by socially oriented NGOs, in no way diminishes the result that allows one to feel optimism about the future. In his recent annual address to the Federal Assembly, President Vladimir Putin said: "We will continue to support socially oriented non-profit organizations. Such NGOs tend to unite people who possess a keen sense of civic duty, who understand

how much mercy, attention, care and kindness signify. We need to use their suggestions and experience, including their implementation of social initiatives."

Marat Khairtdinov, head of the Science Department at the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation and a lecturer at the Moscow Islamic Institute, spoke with genuine enthusiasm about the scientific and historical side of the issue of equality between men and women. He cited the Surah Ghafir, which says that the one who commits evil will receive appropriate reward and the one who practices good — a man or a woman — and believes in God will enter Paradise. ... Thus, according to Islamic doctrine, men and women are God's creations, whose mission is to offer gratitude to and worship God, do good deeds and avoid evil. All men as well as all women will be judged by their deeds and intentions.

Later, the chair of the Union of Muslims of Russia, Nailya Ziganshina, spoke of her practical experience in solving the problems of loneliness, preparation for marriage, as well as the secrets of "the school for brides," where the percentage of strong families is 90 percent of the number of all registered marriages.

Olga Vakulinskaya, head of the Russian chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace, spoke about the extremely acute problem of moral education in the modern educational institutions where she, along with colleagues and like-minded people, gives hundreds of lectures that inspire even the most difficult classes. With her experience and emotional openness, she said she receives a lot of grateful responses from children and young people whose moral foundations have been exposed to severe trials of life. Those who have experienced moral agony find hope and even manage to overcome the barrier of differences with their parents.

The next speaker was Lyudmila Zyuzina, head of the public organization Common Cause, which deals in relations with educational institutions. This organization acquired its good reputation by providing the needed modern, accessible and useful materials, including videos on the Internet, on prevention of alcohol and tobacco addiction. According to recent statistics, the rate of harmful habits in Russia has decreased, and yet Russia is still far behind the level recommended by the World Health Organization.

One of the keynote speeches was given by Secretary General of UPF-Eurasia Konstantin Krylov, who spoke about big efforts carried out by UPF, the main focuses of which are the traditional family and interethnic peace and cooperation.

At the end of the meeting, a representative of the Central House of Artists, producer Valentina Vladislavleva, expressed the general opinion about the audience being not just followers but a cohesive team in spirit and purpose. Anna Suhodimtseva, representative of the Russian Academy of Education, added: "Our biggest national treasure is not mineral wealth or natural resources. It is the family that is selflessly preserving traditions and moral foundations."

The result of the fruitful joint work was a large-scale and multifaceted analysis of family values in today's society, with the challenges faced by each person and, of course, by social organizations. After discussing their experiences, the participants mapped out a plan for further joint activities. They generally agreed that joint efforts will contribute to creating peace in the family and stability in the society.

