

The International Media Association for Peace launches its Oceania chapter

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The International Media Association for Peace launched its Oceania chapter and held its first webinar last 7th November 2020, 11AM AEST time on the theme, "The Quest for Trustworthy Journalism in an Age of Unchecked Social Media and Fake News." In this webinar, the speakers from America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu shared their insights and views regarding a responsible and moral media and call for the media to come together and work together to form an initiative in the Pacific that can expand and contribute to a Peaceful world. There were 76 online participants for this webinar coming from 10 nations and 377 views on Facebook.

Mr. Geoffrey Fyers, Secretary-General of UPF New Zealand, was the moderator for this webinar. He said that there has never been a more urgent time especially in the media when the different perspectives can come together and share insights and understanding to help create a more harmonious and peaceful world.



Mr. Yutaka Yamada, Chairman of UPF Oceania, introduced the late Father Sun Myung Moon and Mother Hak Ja Han Moon primarily as religious leaders who are passionate in achieving world peace through innovative ways including the media. He stressed the importance of resolving the declining media credibility and esteem while preserving the freedom of press.

Dr. Robert Kittel, Coordinator of IMAP Asia Pacific, gave the keynote remarks. He introduced the mission of World Peace Media Conference founded in 1978 by Father and Mother Moon re-branded as International Media Association for Peace. He mentioned last 02 February 2020, the World Summit 2020 during the IMAP Inaugural Conference gathered 500 media persons from 45 nations.

Mr John Ruddik, a media commentator for Sydney Morning Herald, the Spectator and Sky News TV and

author of " Make the Liberal Party Great Again", Australia, said that, "If the country is a democracy and then the media is automatically powerful." He asked whether it is possible to live with the media ideal in today's highly polarized society. He encourage all of us not to give up on the hope of an objective media and to create a path where that can happened. He said he is not very optimistic but he does not want to give up hope.

Mr Kennedy Maeakafa Fakana'ana'a-ki-Fualu, Founder Tonga News Hub, Tonga, shared about Media Strategy He believes that there are a lot of voices and noises from media outlets that are very partisan even in Tonga, a small Island nation that ward off colonization. He decided to create Tonga News Hub to be a platform where he can share different perspectives of stories and let the people decide.



Ms. Paea Halatanu Nawaqatabu, Administrator and Radio Journalist of Pacifica Radio Fiji, stressed the need of the people to have accurate news in order to govern themselves well. She mentioned that news consumers are not passive because they screen, filter news, create it and even make it go viral such as fake news that leads to a nationwide panic.

Ms Heather Maraki , Editor of Capital FM 107 Newsroom, Vanuatu, gave a background of Vanutu media industry composing of 2 active newspapers, 3 TV channels and 4 radio stations. Social media being access by majority of the population of Vanuatu made the Media Association of Vanuatu to call for an urgent meeting to about discuss accreditation. It aims to lead people to the trustworthy platforms in the social media and reduce the people connecting to rumors or speculations that does not promote peace.

Ms Khairiah A Rahman, Senior Lecturer of Pacific Media Centre AUT University, New Zealand, defined trust in a journalist and interviewee, summarized her points "own your own biases, include the voices of those we write about, persuade without agenda and engage in dialogue to develop better understanding with others and not to participate in viral sharing until we have checked all sources."

Mr. Kenji Watanabe, IMAP Coordinator of UPF Oceania, expressed deep gratitude on behalf of IMAP Oceania to all speakers , panelists and participants. He encouraged all panelists and viewers to work together to make strong voice of the conscience in this region and beyond.