

IAAP in Oceania held its first strategic planning meeting online

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Melbourne, Australia -- The International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) in Oceania held its first strategic planning meeting online on December 13, 2020 to lay out a roadmap for peacebuilding in the region for 2021 and 2022.

Dr. John Bellavance, coordinator of the IAAP-Oceania, chaired the meeting, which was attended by 13 academics and UPF leaders. Each participant talked about their area of expertise and areas of interest with respect to peacebuilding.

Professor Surendra Prasad, head of the School for Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences (SAGEONS) of the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, shared his passion about maintaining a healthy environment to sustain the quality of human life for future generations.

Dr. Steve Ratmetse, president of Nelson Mandela Day Australia; Dr. Nthati Rametse, senior lecturer and program manager in Bachelor of Business (Entrepreneurship and Innovation) at RMIT University, Australia; Dr. Chris Sotiropoulos and Dr. Shahid Yamin, co-founders of Global Opportunities Commercialisation (GOC) spoke about their passion to promote peace through fostering mutual economic prosperity. They maintained that peace cannot exist without economic justice. Financial literacy, education, innovation, entrepreneurship support for men and women, and collaboration are vital to increase prosperity and reduce tensions.

Professor Anoop Swarup, vice chancellor of Jagran Lakecity University, India, and chairman of the Governing Council of the Center for Global Nonkilling (CGNK), Hawaii, talked about his passion to create a world where non-killing is the norm.

Dr. Kanagaraj Noel, a philosopher and psychologist spoke about the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's peacebuilding approach.

Mr. Ahmed Tohow, deputy chair of the board of directors of the Global Somali Diaspora and director of the East Africa Security and Policy Forum, emphasized the need to foster good governance in global leadership. Overall, a cohesive peace was seen as a multidimensional concept encompassing social, economic and environmental factors.

Mr. Greg Stone, secretary general of UPF-Australia, spoke about UPF co-Founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon's long-time investment in the role of academics in peacebuilding, starting from the 1970s.

Rev. John Adamedes, president of UPF-Australia, suggested that interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values could form the basis of the IAAP-Oceania roadmap.

Mr. Steve Evans, vice president of UPF-Australia, maintained that clear objectives need to be set up for the work.

Rev. Yutaka Yamada, chair of UPF-Oceania, urged the participants to provide a concrete and practical vision and work on its implementation for the next 10 years.

It was agreed that a Peace Building Manual would be published in two years and the IAAP committee would act as a think tank to guide government and civil society in creating cohesive peace in Oceania.