

Peace Road Towards Reconciliation and Unity in Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Colombo, Sri Lanka -- For over 25 years, Sri Lanka was engaged in a civil war. Although the conflict ended in 2009, tensions remain.

To raise awareness of the need for peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, UPF's chapter in the country chose "Peace Road Towards Reconciliation and Unity in Sri Lanka" as its theme for its inaugural Peace Road event, which took place on July 9, 2016 in central Colombo

About 150 participants gathered at the Viharamaha Devi Park Open Air Theatre for the Peace Road ride and walk. Lead by Sri Lankan member of parliament (MP), Mr. Heshan Withanage, who was riding a bike, the participants walked and biked to Independence Square and back to the park.

Before the ride and walk, a program took place during which the Peace Road was introduced and speeches were given by local and national government officials.



The program began with prayers and blessings, given by faith leaders. The welcome speech was delivered by Dr. Chula Senaratne, secretary general of UPF-Sri Lanka.

The Peace Road program was introduced by Dr. Edgar Tanate, education director of UPF-South Asia. A peace message was given by deputy minister of Petroleum Resources Development of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Anoma Gamage, and the peace declaration was delivered by Mr. Withanage.

Blessings for the unity of and reconciliation in Sri Lanka were given by former minister and current Sri Lankan MP, Mr. C.B. Ratnayake, and Gampaha district parliamentarian, Mr. Sisira Jayakody, according to the Buddhist tradition.



RYS alumni Dr. R. Sajeewan of National Hospital; Mr. K.K. Masthan, a Wannu district parliamentarian; and Mr. George Perera, councilor of the Western Provincial Council, offered blessings according to the Hindu, Muslim and Christian faith traditions, respectively. Mr. Prageeth Hewage delivered a blessing representing the youth of Sri Lanka.

The Peace Road event was co-organized by UPF, the United Nations Information Center (UNIC), National Youth Services Council, Youth Federation for World Peace, Chain-of-Unity, as well as several other governmental and non-governmental organizations in Sri Lanka.

