

## UPF Australia: Global Experts Call for Renewed Commitment to Multilateralism

John Bellavance  
April 18, 2026  
Vice President, UPF-Australia



Melbourne, Australia – One hundred leading international scholars, policymakers and peace practitioners gathered online on April 18, 2026, to mark the UN International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, calling for a renewed global commitment to cooperation, shared values and ethical leadership in an increasingly uncertain world.

Hosted by the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) Asia Pacific, a primary association of UPF, the webinar brought together speakers from across the globe under the theme: “The UN Charter at a Crossroads: Renewing Commitment to Universal Values, Multilateralism and Diplomacy in an Era of Global Uncertainty.”



The event highlighted the enduring relevance of the United Nations Charter as a cornerstone of

international cooperation, particularly at a time marked by geopolitical tensions, rapid technological change and growing global interdependence.

Opening the session, moderator **Mr. Greg Stone** emphasized that multilateralism remains central to addressing global challenges, noting that “shared values and cooperation are more critical now than ever before.”

The meeting opened with welcoming remarks from **Dr. Tageldin Hamad**, president of UPF- International, who emphasized the importance of multilateralism, dialogue and cooperation in achieving peace. He highlighted UPF's mission to connect values with action and called for the development of a clear and actionable framework for peace through IAAP.

### UN Charter Modernization Proposals

A key presentation by international economist **Dr. Augusto Lopez-Claros** explored efforts by the Global Governance Forum to draft a reformed UN Charter. He argued that reforms are necessary to strengthen global institutions and respond to contemporary challenges, drawing on decades of experience at organizations such as the World Bank and World Economic Forum.

Dr. Lopez-Claros outlined three proposed changes: legacy updates, normative advances and structural reforms. Key proposals included creating a Parliamentary Assembly and expanding the Security Council to 25 members with modified permanent member vetoes that could be overridden by a two-thirds majority vote in the General Assembly.

Dr. Lopez-Claros said that the concept of national security should be broadened to include human development and human security. He discussed the need for structural changes in global governance, including better voter engagement and education about global citizenship. He also explained that Article 109 provides a mechanism for amending the UN Charter without veto power from permanent Security Council members, suggesting this process should be triggered to discuss potential reforms.



### Multilateralism and Global Governance Reforms

Peace negotiator **Mr. Masoom Stanekzai** delivered a compelling address on ethical leadership and diplomacy, reflecting on his experience in Afghanistan's peace processes. He argued that the UN Charter remains the most viable framework for managing international peace and security, arguing that the Charter's relevance is not diminishing but being “tested.” He urged nations to act in the spirit of its founding vision to prevent future conflict. He said, “The central problem is not simply institutional. It is behavioral. The effectiveness of the UN system ultimately depends on whether states – and particularly major powers – choose to act within its rules. The gap between principle and practice is widening. Without sustained political commitment, even the strongest legal frameworks cannot deliver collective security.”

Mr. Stanekzai highlighted challenges such as the erosion of international legal norms and the rise of unilateral actions. He emphasized the need for structural and ethical reforms within the UN system, including addressing the veto power in the Security Council and strengthening diplomatic efforts to prevent conflicts. He also stressed the importance of shifting decision-making from individual countries to collective multilateral processes, and called for a commitment to peaceful resolution of conflicts rather than the use of force, adding that “the decisive variable is ethical leadership.”

### **Global Citizenship and Peace Initiatives**

**Dr. John Bellavance** presented on the concept of global citizenship based on universal values. He explained: 1) The global village needs shared values; 2) Artificial Intelligence must be guided by values; 3) Scientific and economic development must be guided by values; 4) Polarization – “us vs them” – must be countered; 5) Interfaith dialogue requires shared values.

Dr. Bellavance examined the role of human values in an age shaped by artificial intelligence, arguing that true intelligence must go beyond technical capability to include empathy and moral responsibility. “In a world increasingly influenced by AI, our shared human values – dignity, equality, freedom, justice and peace – are more important than ever,” he said, pointing to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a guiding ethical foundation. Dr. Bellavance encouraged scholars to contribute a chapter in the new IAAP book on Universal Values, Interdependence and Mutual Prosperity.

### **Linking Multilateralism with Health Security**

**Dr. Wali Islam** then spoke about the intersection of multilateralism, health security, social cohesion and sustainable development, drawing parallels between the body's immune system and societal cooperation. He said, “Biological systems do not operate in isolation, and neither do human societies. The same interconnectedness that governs immune responses within the human body also shapes relationships among nations, institutions, and communities.”

He maintained that multilateralism is not merely a diplomatic preference; it is an essential condition for achieving global health security, sustaining social cohesion and delivering meaningful and equitable development outcomes.

The webinar concluded with an interactive Q&A and discussion, where participants echoed a common message: that global peace and stability depend not only on institutions, but on a collective commitment to shared values and responsible leadership.

As the world navigates complex and interconnected challenges, the event served as a timely reminder that multilateralism – rooted in trust, dialogue and cooperation – remains essential to building a peaceful and sustainable future. The discussion highlighted the need for ongoing dialogue and reform to promote global peace and address systemic issues.