

UPF and WFWP Italy's Peace Talks: Political Cooperation and Good Governance

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Rome, Italy -- Current and former senators and academics discussed the need to work together to solve the current world crises.

The third webinar of the Peace Talks series organized by UPF in collaboration with Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization, was titled "Political Cooperation and Good Governance: Essential for Social Cohesion and Recovery."

The online conference, held on June 18, 2020, was followed by 100 participants. An estimated several hundred additional participants watched a live stream of the webinar on the UPF-Italy Facebook page and on the Eco dei Palazzi channel, which broadcasts within the two houses of Parliament.

The speakers were:

Sen. Roberto Rampi, a senator and a member of the Council of Europe, a UPF Ambassador for Peace, and project coordinator for International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace, a project of UPF

Sen. Pier Ferdinando Casini, a senator, a former president of the Chamber of Deputies, and the president of the Italian Interparliamentary Assembly

Sen. Orietta Vanin, a senator, a member of the Commission on Public Education and Cultural Heritage, and a member of the Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

Professor Marco Lombardi, the director of the Department of Sociology of Catholic University of Milan, a lecturer in media communication and security policies, and an Ambassador for Peace

Hon. Albertina Soliani, a former senator and undersecretary of state for education, the president of the Alcide Cervi Institute, the co-founder of the Association Italy/Burma, an Ambassador for Peace, and the "godmother" of IAPP.

The meeting was introduced by WFWP-Italy Vice President Gabriella Mieli, with WFWP-Italy President Elisabetta Nistri offering greetings to the participants. Carlo Zonato, president of UPF-Italy, introduced and moderated the meeting. Franco Ravaglioli, the secretary general of UPF-Italy, presented the questions

to the panelists, while the technical and directing aspects were conducted by Giorgio Gasperoni, editor in chief of the UPF/WFWP magazine *Voci di Pace*.

Sen. Roberto Rampi: "Since the beginning of my experience with UPF I have been struck by the particular attention of UPF toward politics and parliamentarians, especially because politics is a bit out of fashion. There is a widespread attitude of anti-politics that underlines many flaws and limits without, however, the awareness of daily work. Instead, UPF has given value to politics and parliamentarians as representatives of the people who confront different points of view and then come to a synthesis.

"The other great theme is interdependence, the interconnection of the whole of humanity, so that every decision made in a certain place or moment has implications as a whole, and it is necessary to be aware of this and therefore responsible. From this point of view, there is a need to increase freedoms, rights and protections for all the citizens of the world.

"Another issue to point out is the look toward the East; the axis of the world has moved toward the Pacific Ocean. It is, in fact, the Pacific Era, and, if the name symbolizes something, the hope is that we are moving toward the Era of Peace. But this does not happen by chance or otherwise, but according to our choices, actions, gestures and commitment. Getting worse or better out of COVID depends only on us, and to be able to do it well, we need moments and organizations like UPF that open the confrontation to bring reflections and inspirations."

Sen. Pier Ferdinando Casini: "A sincere appreciation to UPF for its work that helps civil society a lot but also politics. I would like to refer to the 'three Cs' mentioned by Professor [Marco] Lombardi: awareness, competence and involvement [in the Italian language these three words all start with the letter 'C']. In these, there is the synthesis of how to transform the coronavirus from a problem into an opportunity.

"First of all, in understanding that we are not the masters of life and death, and we must consciously take note of this. An example beyond the coronavirus concerns the case of the environmental problem, in front of which we run the risk of transferring a legacy of serious problems to the next generation. We have been talking about it for some years now, but perhaps we are not really aware of what this problem may entail and we are not taking proper care of it.

"Another important consideration concerns the issue of migration involving entire populations, because they do not find adequate sustenance in their places of origin, because of desertification and severe water shortages.

"The coronavirus must make us aware of and willing to tackle these problems, which are now global. This awareness, however, needs competence, both technical and political, without improvisation, to face and solve these problems adequately. In any case, political expertise also must create involvement of public opinion and civil society. In this, [an organization] like UPF becomes an important glue that I will try to support as much as I can."

Sen. Orietta Vanin: "I am a teacher at my first public experience, and I realize the degree of responsibility we have with our reflections and thoughts; by putting them into action, we can change people's lives. Peace is a fundamental to pursue, but in my opinion it is made of many small [instances of] peace that together form the most comprehensive one. Therefore, the debate in politics is also fundamental, but with respect for the diversity of each person. Respect puts us in a position of equality, necessary for a complete confrontation. The global problem of the coronavirus has highlighted our fragility, and so a leap in quality and awareness to promote the culture of peace is indispensable. In this, the world of schools is a privileged area for this work of culture."

Professor Marco Lombardi: "COVID-19 is the first real global crisis we are facing nowadays. For the first time we all were involved in it, compared to certain localized catastrophes (earthquakes, floods, etc.) of the past, during which help was perhaps coming from those who had not been affected. The coronavirus

was like a powerful 'biological weapon' that was inserted in a world in conflict (with various wars in progress) without [us] being able to identify a culprit that triggered it. It is a matter of starting from here to look for ways and opportunities not to return to the previous status quo, but to determine a real improvement in 'change' that we must pursue.

"The coronavirus has brought out the awareness of how interdependent we are because, despite the closures of frontiers or borders, the domino effect of the virus has crossed over and evolved in a global way. It's not a question of waging war on the virus, because we can't do it that way, but looking for ways to control its effects. We were also faced with the surprise, meaning unawareness of the problem, which has triggered a lack of competence in managing it. The COVID crisis is fought with the three 'Cs': awareness (of the problem), competence (in how to deal with it) and involvement (enabling everyone to deal with it properly)."

Hon. Albertina Soliani: "I have always considered politics to be strictly connected to life, and in these weeks of closure this consideration has been further strengthened. Disasters and catastrophes always push toward a greater unity to understand together how to get out of it. In this there is always an ethical question that makes us choose the direction. Survival makes sense if we emerge from it together, precisely because we are interdependent. And then how we live afterward. What is happening drives us to stay together.

"[Italian] President [Sergio] Mattarella spoke of making a 'common effort' to win together as a people. This calls us to the unity of peoples, nations and continents. It is also a moral and ethical challenge of how we want to be as people, within ourselves, and it becomes a political challenge, because politics is precisely the capacity to stay together. In this we have a heritage that is that one of shared values for which we have paid incredible sacrifices and suffering in the time that has passed.

"Unity, freedom and responsibility are fundamental key words to produce a qualitative leap to be new after this further sacrifice. This kind of reflection and debate would be very necessary in the parliamentary arena. What good are differences, if not to pursue unity of action for the good of all? Therefore, a debate to identify common goals but above all on the 'direction.' How to get out of poverty? How to overcome discrimination, especially racial discrimination? The choice of schools as a great laboratory of education and training for all; the great theme of human and environmental relations as a source of value for the common society; culture; biodiversity as a strategic heritage for tomorrow.

"A parliament should discuss these aspects in order to understand what path to take for a solid recovery. It should also consider the dimension of spirituality as a vital element also for politics and political debate, for an open dialogue that can also give answers to consciences.

"Finally, we must keep alive the dialogue that is no longer only between North-South but also East-West in the present time, because we need each other. On this basis the coming years could be years of great moral and even political change within humanity as a whole. The challenge is great, but only with a long vision of a renewed humanity can we grow and improve, but we need to act together."

In conclusion, Carlo Zonato, the president of UPF-Italy, thanked the speakers. He then underlined UPF's efforts in contributing to the promotion of dialogue and interdisciplinary and interreligious action. In particular, UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon in the last three years has established a series of forward-looking UPF projects. The International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP), International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP), International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), International Association for Peace and Economic Development (IAED), and International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) will work for peace in an integrated way by forming "a God-centered Holy Community." In this way, UPF and its associations will build unity on the higher universal principle of living for the good of the entire human family.