

## The inauguration of IAPP at the Malawian Parliament building in Lilongwe, Malawi

Ronald Mwambo  
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Lilongwe, Malawi -- Forty-five members of the Malawian Parliament took part in the inauguration of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) on Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at the Malawian Parliament building during a meeting sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF). Among the members of parliament present were the first deputy speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Esther Mcheka Chilenje, and Hon. Raphael Juma, the chief whip of the Malawi Congress Party, the main opposition party. Also came to grace the occasion were Rev. Frackson L. Kuyama, president of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church of Malawi; Rev. Banda of the Presbyterian Church, and five journalists from broadcast and print media.

The program had two parts. The first was an introduction to UPF, and the second part saw the inauguration of IAPP itself. Reverend Kuyama gave the invocation. He told the story of a mouse that collaborated with an elephant in order to cross a bridge, putting emphasis on the need to make sure God is always part of what we do. "Dear Members of Parliament," he said, "if you partner with God, you will be able to do great things!"

The master of ceremonies, Ronald Mwambo, secretary general of UPF-Malawi, then invited Hon. Patricia Annie Kaliati, president of UPF-Malawi and regional co-chair of IAPP, to give welcoming remarks. She thanked all the participants for coming and went on to talk about humanity's quest for inner peace that started with Adam and Eve after the Fall. Hon. Kaliati, pointed out the lack of inner peace that caused Abraham and Sarah to send Hagar away, the sons of Jacob to sell their brother Joseph, the Israelites to rebel against Moses, and so forth. She exhorted all the members of parliament to work on securing inner peace. "Peace in the home is key to peace in the workplace and society at large," she said. She expressed her gratitude to UPF's founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, for supporting the launch of the IAPP in Malawi as well as the delegation of Malawi to the Africa Summit in Senegal. "We are grateful for your prayers and continued support," the UPF-Malawi president said.

Hon. Kaliati then introduced the next speaker, Hon. Esther Mcheka Chilenje, first deputy speaker of the Malawi Parliament. She said Malawi is indeed privileged to see this day, the launching of the IAPP: "Peace is a key commodity for nations. Where there are tensions, conflicts, there cannot be development." She commended UPF for all its activities and its peace efforts: "I fully support this organization and through it, I believe, I can contribute to the establishment of a holistic peace that the world craves for." A group photo then took place outside at the lobby of the Parliament building.

Jean Augustin Ghomsi, acting regional secretary general of UPF for East Africa, introduced UPF and its founders' vision. He explained that Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon founded UPF on September 12, 2005, in New York as a network of individuals and organizations dedicated to world peace while affirming and applying universal, spiritual principles to conflict resolution and reconciliation of the divided human family. He explained UPF's core values. "Our founders," he said, "envision a world in which we all live in interdependence, co-prosperity and universally shared values. They advocate genuine love, which is based on the principle of living for the sake of others, as a foundation for true peace. When we can all live for the greater good, there is hope for true peace."

Two videos introducing UPF and its founders were shown before the tea break. After the break, Mr. Ghomsi introduced the IAPP as a program of UPF intended to be a global alliance of current and former members of parliament, joined together to promote a unified world in which all people live together in harmony, cooperation and co-prosperity. The IAPP, he said, provides a mechanism for cooperative peace-building efforts among the executive and legislative branches, all working together with mutual respect and a shared commitment to cooperation and good governance.

Hon. D. Namachekecha read the founder's address at the First World Assembly of the IAPP given in February 2017 in Seoul, South Korea. In her address, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon said, "In our hearts we all desire to have a united world -- a peaceful, happy, united world -- but so many walls block our way. ... All nations, all of you, must attend God, our Creator, our Heavenly Parent, in your nations in order for world peace to come."

Hon. Esther Chilenje was the first to sign Malawi's founding IAPP resolution. She said she is ready to take part in all of UPF and IAPP programs, both locally and internationally, and that she could be counted on, both as first deputy speaker and as a woman leader. All the other members of the parliament were invited to also sign.

Hon. Beatrice Mwale thanked the founders of UPF for their vision for peace and conveyed her gratitude for this inaugural meeting of IAPP. "This message needs to be known at all quarters," she said. Rev. Banda of the Churches of Central African Presbyterians gave the closing prayer.

Starting on December 4, Hon. Patricia Kaliati went on local radio shows to talk about UPF and the launching of IAPP in Malawi. She and Mr. Ghomsi gave interviews to the five journalists who came to the program.

The inauguration happened in a very sensitive and highly volatile political situation. All churches and civil society organizations were planning to have a strike on December 13 to force the government to review the electoral code ahead of the general elections of 2019. UPF-Malawi had a meeting with the speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Richard Musowoya on November 7, 2017, who described the efforts of the president of Malawi and himself to diffuse tension. It is worth noting that Malawi is one of the rare countries in Africa where the ruling party leads the executive and the legislative is led by the opposition.

