

## UPF Italy Webinar Promotes Environmental Sustainability

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**Rome, Italy** – As part of its series on Being Builders of Peace, UPF-Italy held a webinar on the theme “Environmental Sustainability for a Culture of Peace” on February 24, 2025. The speakers were **Mr. Mario Salomone**, secretary-general of the World Environmental Education Congress Network (WEEC Network) and **Professor Paola Lotti**, president of the Lombardy Delegation. The moderator was **Mr. Carlo Zonato**, president of UPF-Italy.



Mr. Salomone opened his speech by emphasizing the importance of environmental education in the context of a global crisis, which he described as a “polycrisis,” encompassing ecological, political, and climate-related crises. He pointed out that environmental education must take a holistic approach, recognizing the interdependence between humanity and the planet. He explained that this interrelationship implies a deep connection between human actions and natural processes. Therefore, education should not be limited to merely transmitting information, but should also encourage active listening and mutual learning.

Mr. Salomone then provided a brief overview of human history, showing how different revolutions – agricultural, industrial, and digital – have transformed societies and contributed to inequality. He underscored that history is marked by continuous change, and that today’s challenges require a new way of thinking and acting. He spoke about the need for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary education to address the complexities of the modern world. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of integrating traditional and Indigenous knowledge, recognizing the value of local experiences.

Criticizing the idea of unlimited economic growth on a planet with finite resources, he cited “The Limits to Growth,” a report commissioned by the non-profit organization the Club of Rome. He warned that the

continuous expansion of human activities is exceeding ecological and social limits, with potentially devastating consequences. Mr. Salomone also pointed out that military expenditures divert vital resources away from environmental management and public health, and that conflicts over the control of natural resources are often the cause of wars. He argued that sustainability and peace must be addressed together, as their causes and solutions are deeply interconnected.



Professor Lotti shared her extensive experience as an educator, focusing on her daily interactions with young people and their growing sense of environmental responsibility, noting that youths often feel overwhelmed by the gravity of the challenges ahead. She stressed that education should not be limited to the transmission of knowledge, but should also focus on developing the skills needed to face the future. She cited key competencies identified by the European Union, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, drawing attention to the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular attention to Goal 4, which promotes quality education and the spread of a culture of peace and inclusion. She highlighted the importance of educating young people about cultural diversity and global citizenship.

The professor also introduced the concept of transdisciplinarity, explaining how this educational approach allows for the analysis of reality from multiple perspectives. She discussed the need to integrate sustainability education into school curricula, with regard to economic and social as well as environmental issues.

Professor Lotti concluded her speech by reaffirming the value of shared principles such as equity and respect for others. She pointed out that education must go beyond classrooms and involve families and communities so that young people can grow up in an environment that supports their development as global citizens.

Both speakers emphasized the urgency of addressing environmental and social challenges through education that fosters awareness, responsibility, and collaboration. They reiterated the need for a profound cultural shift involving all levels of society – from young people to institutions – to build a sustainable and peaceful future.