

# European Leadership Conference “Eurasia & Europe: Cooperating for a Culture of Peace & Human Development”

Paris, France, 3. – 4. December 2013



## CONFERENCE THEME

The conference theme ("Eurasia & Europe: Cooperating for a Culture of Peace & Human Development") was chosen to align our event and True Parents' heart with UNESCO's new "***Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures***" that was inaugurated in August 2013 at the instigation of Kazakhstan and passed to UNESCO by the U.N. in New York.

## VENUE

The conference was held at the Hotel Novotel Vaugirard in Paris. Originally, it was planned to hold the event at UNESCO's world H.Q. in Paris in view of the key conference objective of reaching out to Russia and its Eurasian Allies. Early on, the support of the delegations of Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to UNESCO were obtained so as to enable us to hold the event at UNESCO and at reduced cost.

Later, the Russian delegation got inspired to support and their ambassador even signed our invitation letter. However, due to the withdrawal of Russia after heavy pressure from Moscow brought on (amongst other things) by their fear of what former President Kravchuk of Ukraine and First Lady Margarita Timofti of Moldova might be going to say

about Russia at our conference), some negative UNESCO officials took advantage of Russia's withdrawal from our conference to try to prevent our holding it at UNESCO and Tajikistan was informed that they could no longer have the rooms booked for our conference. In these circumstances, we were obliged to find an alternative venue nearby and due to the hard work of the staff, we could transfer the event from UNESCO to the hotel at 4 days' notice!

## MAIN PURPOSE(S) OF THE CONFERENCE

The main purpose of the conference was to seek to fulfill True Father's direction given to the European movement in September 2011 by phone from Korea to Geneva "*to take responsibility to help open Russia to True Parents*". In addition, it was an opportunity to develop the foundation of high level AfPs in Europe and Eurasia and to spread True Parents vision and thought to a high level audience

## CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS & SPEAKERS

Dr Chang Shik Yang and Dr Thomas Walsh attended and Dr Yang spoke in the opening plenary session representing True Parents point of view about the importance of global cultural integration and of Europe and Eurasia coming together in closer understanding and partnership.



*Dr Chang Shik Yang - Dr Thomas Walsh - H.E. Dr Federico Mayor, the former Director-General of UNESCO (1987-1999) - HE Leonid Kravchuk, the former President of Ukraine 1992-1994 - HE Dr Boutros Boutros Ghali, a former Secretary-General of the U.N. (1992-1997) - HE Margareta Timofti, 1st Lady of Moldova*

Approximately 200 people attended throughout all sessions including high level representatives from Eurasia and many European nations. There was also an excellent spirit of dialogue and cooperation among the participants.

Among the more notable speakers and contributors were the following:-

1. H.E. Dr Federico Mayor, the former Director-General of UNESCO (1987-1999).
2. HE Leonid Kravchuk, the former President of Ukraine 1992-1994
3. HE Dr Boutros Boutros Ghali, a former Secretary-General of the U.N. (1992-1997)
4. HE Margareta Timofti, 1st Lady of Moldova
5. Mrs. Rabih Sfeir, the sister of the current President of Lebanon
6. H.E. Rustamjon Soliev, the Tajik Ambassador to UNESCO
7. Prof Abdufattoh Sharifzoda, the Press Secretary and spokesperson of President Rahmon of Tajikistan
8. Dr Abdullo Ghafurov, Head of Division of Common History of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan
9. Mr Harry Benson, the top expert in The United Kingdom on strengthening marriage and family
10. Ms. Maria Hildingsson, Secretary General of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe.

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The event was divided into 8 panels over the 2 days with 4-5 high level speakers in each one and with a unificationist speaker representing either UPF or WFWP seeking to put across True Parents viewpoint in each panel.

The 8 panel topics consisted of the opening Plenary Session: on "*Eurasia & Europe: Cooperating for a Culture of Peace & Human Development*" the overall conference theme, a session on "*The Role of Women in the Rapprochement of Cultures*", a session on "*Cultural Cooperation between Eurasia & Europe*", one on "*Character Education and Human Development*", a "*Youth Forum*" on the Role of *Volunteering in Enhancing Cooperation between Eurasia & Europe*", a session on *how Inter-cultural & Interreligious Exchange can bring about Human Development*, a session on "*The Family as a Vehicle for Cultural Rapprochement Between East & West*" and a "*wrap up session*" in which all participants could express how rapprochement between Europe and Eurasia could be achieved.

3 of the presentations in the opening plenary were by renowned international figures whose association with the conference lent it considerable prestige and credibility. These were as follows:-



*Mrs. Rabih Sleiman Sfeir, the sister of the current President of Lebanon - H.E. Rustamjon Soliev, the Tajik Ambassador to UNESCO - Prof Abdufattoh Sharifzoda, the Press Secretary and spokesperson of President Rahmon of Tajikistan - Dr Abdullo Ghafurov, Head of Division of Common History of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan - Mr Harry Benson, the top expert in The United Kingdom on strengthening marriage and family - Ms. Maria Hildingsson, Secretary General of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe.*



1. The former Director-General of UNESCO (1987-1999) **H.E. Dr Federico Mayor** is world famous for his advocacy of "The Culture of Peace" which he promoted while he was Director-General. He also met True Parents many years ago when he attended the ICUS in his capacity as a leading scientist in Spain in the field of Biochemistry. He spoke by video as he was unable to attend in person! He also gave permission for his own NGO (entitled "Culture of Peace") to be an official supporter and sponsor of our event and its logo appeared on all conference literature.
2. The former President of Ukraine 1992-1994, **HE Leonid Kravchuk**, was prevented from attending due to the current crisis in Ukraine but sent his Press Secretary to read his speech for him.
3. **HE Dr Boutros Boutros Ghali**, a former Secretary-General of the U.N. (1992-1997) and an Ambassador for Peace of UPF who has many times spoken at or sent messages of support to UPF events, was in Egypt at the time of our event but sent a very warm and supportive message that was read for him at The opening plenary session.

## CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

In spite of the fact that we could not hold the conference in UNESCO as originally planned, reactions of participants were very positive. We were particularly grateful that the most positive reactions came from Russian and Eurasian participants who were the key target audience.

Typical but most gratifying of all was a very positive interview to his nation (Azerbaijan's) main news agency (see original below) which was given by **Dr Rajiv Aligayev**, Former Minister of Religion of Azerbaijan and which was published on line. In his interview he said in short the following, *"Relations between Europe and Eurasia are so bad and the cultural and other differences are so complicated that no one really wants to undertake a real dialogue or make an attempt for a real cooperation between the two. I was truly moved by the group assembled in Paris by UPF which genuinely wants to build dialogue and understanding. This is very encouraging to finally see good people under a good organization in action. They will prevail"*.



**Prof Rafig Aliyev** also wrote his personal letter of thanks to the organisers, as follows, *"I would like to thank you for your invitation to take part in The European Leadership Conference "Eurasia & Europe: Cooperating for a Culture of*

*Peace & Human Development" and to express my viewpoint on the agenda of the important event.*

*I would like to note that the conference was well-organized and successful, and allowed every participant to exchange good emotions. It gave a chance to join the general positive aura that you and your excellent team create at every meeting.*

*I thank you once again and wish you good luck in your noble work – creation and protection of peace and concord in the world. I would be very glad to cooperate with you in future."*

There were many other favorable comments in conversations with key participants.



**Professor Veniamin Popov**, a former Russian Ambassador to many nations and now head of The Russian government's office that deals with inter-civilizational dialogue and social integration matters spoke very highly of the

conference. He said that he could assure us 100% that the Russian Ambassador to UNESCO had not sought to give any difficulties to UPF and was willing to cooperate in the future. He said that he would give a very good report on his return to Moscow and he has already posted a simple report on the website of the Russian Academy of Sciences!

It was also notable that staff from both Eurasia and Europe had very good experiences and very positive assessments of the outcomes. They also reported very favorable reactions from the participants



**Mr. Konstantin Krylov**, Secretary-General for UPF in Eurasia and based in Moscow summarised the benefits felt by the Eurasia region when he wrote, *"The program was just great. I understand that UNESCO failure seems tragic in Paris. There is nothing of*

*the kind here. It never existed in a sense. We have a positive report by every one of participants. We opened the doors to Moldova and Tajikistan on the state level like never before. We obtained higher levels in Russia. The Russian UNESCO Mission recognizes that it owes us. The participant from Azerbaijan was very good a contact too for the future. Geneva next after us? I want to un-recommend St. Petersburg. I am suggesting Azerbaijan or still Ukraine. It will be good and fresh after the revolution... it is being discussed now."*



**Mrs. Brigitte Wada,** President of WFPW France wrote, *"It was a good event in spite we didn't do it in UNESCO. Many of our guests were impressed and I really feel more and more that we are really the Abel type of organisation "Abel UN" and "Abel women UN" because*

*the content of our conferences specially families values, interreligious and youth attract more and more Abel type people. There are not the most important topics in UNESCO and in United Nations. It was also good for our Eurasian guests and brothers and sisters."*



**Miss Marlies Haider,** Coordinator of Youth UPF Austria, wrote, *"It was a great honor for me to be part of these great events and also being able to share some of my thoughts! I believe the ILC was a great success and hope that many fruits will from it. It*

*was a really great experience for me and I am looking forward to the next events. Thank you so much for all your effort for this conference and for UPF! It is such a great work you are doing!"*

Among the key goals achieved through this event were the following:-

1. Ambassadors for Peace were moved to offer their support to enable UPF to overcome the hostility at UNESCO. Some expressed that they felt that we had enough good friends and allies to start an application to be accepted by UNESCO as one of its affiliated NGOs, in a similar way to that in which UPF & WFPW are NGO's in Consultative status with the U.N. in New York!
2. A number of key new high level persons attended who wish to cooperate with UPF and WFPW in the future, as follows:-

- i. The First Lady of Moldova, Mrs Margarita Timofti, wife of The President, attended and was very impressed. She met Dr Yang and invited him to Moldova and expressed interest in her nation hosting UPF or WFPW events there in the future
- ii. The sister of the President of Lebanon (Mrs. Rabih Sfeir) found out about our event on the internet and approached us from Lebanon about attending! She stayed till the end and paid all costs of travel hotel etc for herself and for her daughter. She expressed that it had been a very good experience.
- iii. The Tajikistan Ambassador to UNESCO (Mr Rustom Soliev) attended and spoke and brought two top people of his nation to attend from his country. One ( Prof Abdufattoh SHARIFZODA), is Press Secretary to President Rahmon of Tajikistan and the other ( Dr Abdullo GHAFUROV), Head of the Division of Common History of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. Both spoke in the conference and at a meeting with Ambassador Soliev Dr Yang was invited to visit Tajikistan along with Dr Walsh, as a special guest of President Rahmon and to meet with him and discuss future projects of UPF
- iv. Mr Harry Benson of The Marriage Foundation, London, is the top UK expert of the leading organisation in Britain designed to strengthen marriage and family ties attended our event for the first time and expressed the desire to cooperate with us in future.
- v. Mrs Maria Hildingsson, Secretary General of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe is also open to cooperation and to attending future events. Her organisation is a very important one!
- vi. Professor Marietta Stepanyants, Professor of Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the Federation of Russia, is considered the leading philosopher in Russia.
- vii. Prof. Veniamin Popov, Director, the Center for Partnership of Civilizations, Moscow.

