



Vol. 1 Issue 2 Autumn 2024

# CONNECTIONS

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## The United Nations and the Future

The Voice of Youth: Can We Change the World?  
Advancing a Family-Friendly Agenda at the United Nations  
Could a UN Office in the DMZ Stabilize the Region?  
Establishing Trust in a Human-Centered AI

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Dr. Charles S. Yang  
International Chairman  
Universal Peace Federation

# MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The UN General Assembly has taken a bold step forward with the adoption of the Pact for the Future on September 22, during the Summit of the Future in New York. The Pact addresses critical issues including economic inequality, the digital divide, and the impacts of climate change. However, it minimizes or ignores other key issues that must be faced if the world's people are to live together and cooperate amicably toward a shared future.

One of these is the importance of the family. As the articles in this issue highlight, the family is where an individual's outlook, attitude and behavior are shaped. Good governance must include protection and support for families to ensure stable societies and peaceable nations. Another is the recognition that religious beliefs are a central element in the lives of people and communities around the world, contributing to social cohesion and harmony.

The founders of UPF, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, have advocated that the United Nations institute a Religious Council comprised of religious leaders from every member state, to function alongside the General Assembly. Their reasoning is that such leaders would bring a crucial spiritual perspective to discussions of worldly affairs, as well as a genuinely altruistic desire to benefit all humanity.

Another concept our founders have proposed addresses the matter of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. They have suggested that a Peace Park be built in the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea, and that an office of the UN Secretariat be opened on the Korean Peninsula. Currently, the UN Secretariat has offices in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The Asia-Pacific region is home to over 50 UN member states and a population of 4.5 billion, more than half the world's population. The establishment of this 5th UN Office would send a powerful message, transforming a symbol of division into one of peace. It would guarantee the peace between North and South Korea, and also strengthen the UN's role in conflict mediation within the broader region. This concept has become increasingly relevant as tensions have built in this region in recent years. This idea is also discussed in this issue.

We applaud the ongoing efforts at the United Nations to shape a bright future; at the same time, we hope that the organization can expand its scope to consider a more holistic view of humanity, as one family under God.

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UPF is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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Cover Photo: The delegation of the USA Chapter of International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) at the Action Days inside UN Headquarters.

# Goals and Outcome of the Summit of the Future

By Genie Kagawa



At the General Assembly in 2015 the United Nations adopted an ambitious agenda known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Each member state was to undertake 17 tasks aimed at reducing poverty and advancing development worldwide. However, a UN report released in June, 2024 concluded that the world is off-track in achieving these goals. While some progress has been made, its benefits are spread unevenly. In many areas, extreme poverty and hunger are on the rise. Global emissions are at their highest levels in human history, as are levels of human displacement. Threats from climate change, food insecurity, weapons of mass destruction, pandemics and health crises, and risks associated with new technologies are rising.

## Expectations for the Summit

The proposal for the Summit of the Future originated in a document by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Our Common

Agenda, which called for a renewal of trust and solidarity between peoples, countries and generations. It made the case for a fundamental rethink of political, economic and social systems so that they deliver more fairly and effectively for everyone. The Pact for the Future, to be negotiated and endorsed by member states, was intended to shape an international system that is better prepared to manage present and future challenges.

To engage non-state actors, the UN Secretary-General organized two Action Days ahead of the Summit. The Action Days were to kick off with a youth-led program, followed by discussions on three themes: digital and technology, peace and security, and sustainable development and financing. The event would focus on future generations. Expected participants included government officials, senior UN officials and representatives from the private sector and civil society.

The Summit of the Future opened on September 22, and the same day the Pact for the Future was adopted. While its framers may have hoped that it would be adopted unanimously, in the end 22 countries failed



The General Assembly Hall during the Summit of the Future Action Days. (Photo courtesy of IAYSP)

“ We can’t build a future for our grandchildren with a system built for our grandparents. ”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES,  
United Nations Secretary-General

to support it, for different reasons. The vote was 143 in favor, seven opposed, and 15 abstentions.

The Pact includes a Global Digital Compact, aimed at making digital technology, data, and innovation accessible to all nations and peoples. It also includes a Declaration on Future Generations, which calls on member states to take the needs of future generations into account and to include young people in decision-making processes.

### A UN-centered International System

Overall, it appears that the organizers of the Summit are satisfied with its outcome. The official UN document “Pact for the Future: What it Delivers” states: “The adoption of the Pact demonstrates that countries are committed to an international system with the United Nations at its center.”

In his remarks at the Summit, UN Secretary-General Guterres said, “We are here to bring multilateralism back from the brink.” After painting a dire picture of the current state of the world, he praised the Pact for the Future for its commitment to reform the UN system, to make the Security Council more representative, and to update other institutions, including the international financial

architecture, to reflect modern geopolitical realities. He also lauded its renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament, and to international frameworks to govern outer space and new technologies, including AI.

In their speeches, many leaders voiced agreement with the need for reform, and the need for the UN to effectively address such issues as global inequality, the widening gap between rich and poor nations, the growing digital divide, and the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable countries. These same issues were on the agenda during the Action Days, where civil society organizations, many including youthful leadership, advocated for people-centered approaches to global governance.

UN Secretary-General Guterres hailed the Pact for the Future as a landmark achievement, but added a cautionary comment: “This Pact should not become another futile exercise, but must garner political will and commitment across all levels of global leadership to pragmatically address current issues and lay a foundation for solutions for our future global progress and challenges.”

– Genie Kagawa is UPF’s UN representative, and chair emeritus of the NGO Committee on Spiritual, Values and Global Concerns-NY at the United Nations.

# The Voice of Youth: Can We Change the World?

*By John Koester*



The Summit of the Future, held at UN Headquarters in New York, represented a significant moment in global cooperation and the collective reimagining of how international governance can address today's pressing challenges. Envisioned during the global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this Summit brought together representatives from governments, civil society, and the private sector to chart a new course forward.

Youth involvement took center stage. Youth leaders and delegates actively contributed to discussions that shaped the final Pact for the Future, underscoring the importance of young people in driving sustainable solutions, restoring trust in global governance, and ensuring meaningful change for future generations.

The International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) was uniquely positioned to participate, given its special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and its worldwide membership in 50 countries.

## Youth Are Seen, But Are We Heard?

The Summit was preceded by Action Days on September 20-21 that allowed broad participation from youth, civil society, and other stakeholders. Ten representatives from the USA Chapter of IAYSP attended this “once-in-a-generation opportunity” to engage meaningfully in the United Nations’ new direction. Youth-led sessions covered pressing issues like digital technology, peace and security, sustainable development, and the well-being of future generations.

A particularly impactful moment occurred when UN Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the audience. Ms. Kayoung Choi, our communications coordinator, described his remarks as powerful, transparent and inspiring, as he emphasized the need to build the future together rather than choosing sides. He also acknowledged that, in the past, youth had been left out of critical global conversations. This sentiment resonated with the team and its mission to empower young people to take ownership of global peacebuilding.

Ms. Nagma Shrestha, representative to the UN in New York, explained the team’s “divide-and-conquer strategy” to maximize its presence across the many concurrent sessions. By doing so, we were able to engage in various relevant discussions and participate in a wider range of conversations. Recurring themes of rebuilding trust through transparency and the need for leaders to actively listen to marginalized voices, including indigenous communities and scientists, echoed IAYSP’s own emphasis on inclusive intergenerational dialogue and collaboration. These discussions highlighted the global call for addressing long-term risks like climate change through collective action.

While youth participation was celebrated, many young leaders, including Mr. Tiger Rai, our project coordinator, and Ms. Choi, felt that their contributions could have been more substantial. Some sessions lacked the depth needed to move beyond surface-level discussions of key themes. Despite being granted significant access to the UN platform, many young participants spent more time justifying their presence – stressing that they do not seek to replace older generations but to complement them with meaningful representation – rather than delivering substantive input.

This reflects the reality that young leaders still feel the need to establish themselves as essential stakeholders, as they are not yet fully recognized. It also underscores the ongoing need for mentorship and increased opportunities to empower youth to engage more meaningfully. Nevertheless, the Action Days proved valuable for networking and gaining a clearer understanding of how youth and civil society, including organizations like IAYSP, can contribute to advancing the SDGs.

### Observing History in the Making

Following the Action Days, two representatives of the USA Chapter of IAYSP were granted access to the Summit of the Future on September 22-23. This event was attended by world leaders, who adopted the Pact for the Future, a landmark agreement focused on strengthening global cooperation. The Pact included two key annexes, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, addressing issues like digital governance and long-term sustainability. The Pact was adopted with 143 votes in favor, seven against, and 15 abstentions.

Our representatives were present for many of the event's most impactful moments, including the adoption of the Pact for the Future in the presence of global leaders.



*Nagma Shrestha, representative to the UN in New York, raising a placard on achieving gender equality during a Beijing+30 side event at the Summit of the Future.*

Ms. Shrestha highlighted that a key achievement for IAYSP was the strengthening of its relationship with the Nepal Mission to the United Nations, through a meeting with Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli. The USA Chapter of IAYSP is further enhancing its connections with diplomatic missions to explore future collaborations focused on advancing youth initiatives.

Ms. Shrestha pointed out that a central theme throughout the Summit was peace and intergenerational collaboration. The discussions emphasized the importance of



*The delegation of the USA Chapter of IAYSP at the SDG Media Zone inside UN Headquarters.*

bridging the gap between older generations and younger ones to address global challenges. One poignant conversation centered on the issues of loneliness and isolation, focusing on how a multilateral approach can connect people across generations and inform the global environment.

### **Commitment to Building a Better Future**

The USA Chapter of IAYSP's participation in both the Action Days and the Summit of the Future provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with global leaders and advocate for youth involvement in decision-making processes. The Summit allowed the representatives to observe and contribute to discussions about global governance, reinforcing the organization's philosophy of empowering youth as future leaders today.

While there were challenges regarding the depth of youth engagement, the event was a powerful opportunity to witness global unity, learn from diverse voices, and forge meaningful connections for a more sustainable future. IAYSP's commitment to promoting peace through character education and service, and its alignment with the UN SDGs, will continue to drive the organization's work in advancing the Pact for the Future and fostering global cooperation. Through its participation in these high-level discussions, IAYSP remains dedicated to empowering youth and working toward a more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable future.

*– John Koester is the UN Advocacy Advisor for the USA Chapter of IAYSP*

## **Promoting a Public-Minded Philosophy and Lifestyle**

IAYSP is a global organization represented in over 50 countries, working to advance world peace by empowering youth to become global citizens through character education and peace projects that support the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Character education programs instill values such as empathy and responsibility through workshops and training sessions. Community service initiatives, like environmental clean-ups and humanitarian aid efforts, foster global citizenship and social responsibility.

The Peace Designer program mentors young people in designing peace projects, based on their individual strengths, that address community concerns. S!NERGY (Students+Ideas+Energy) is a public speaking competition that invites students to propose innovative solutions to social issues.

In addition, IAYSP's peacebuilding initiatives promote understanding between different cultural and religious groups through interfaith dialogue and youth conferences, empowering young people to become ambassadors of peace. These initiatives align with the UN SDGs, engaging youth in efforts to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality and environmental sustainability.

*The International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) is an independent organization. While IAYSP shares foundational values and a collaborative relationship with UPF, stemming from their shared origins and mission to promote global peace and interfaith dialogue, IAYSP maintains its own programs with a distinct focus on young people and students.*



# Advancing a Family-Friendly Agenda at the United Nations

By Carolyn Handschin-Moser



It was a long-sought and reassuring victory for advocates of pro-family policies at the United Nations: On October 12, 2023, the UN Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 54/17 on

“the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family (1994) in the promotion and protection of human rights.” Item four “invites States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the treaty bodies ... to consider mainstreaming the promotion of family-oriented policies that promote and protect the human rights of all family members as a cross-cutting issue in national development plans and programmes.” It was adopted unanimously by all Council members.

## History of Neglect at the United Nations

The family has weathered harsh judgement, denigration, and near disappearance in UN agendas and experts’ verifications, a slow decline over decades. Debates became too

divisive and emotional over definitions of the family, to the point that it was deemed better to try to pretend that it didn’t exist.

After long abandonment, there was a brief but foundational reemergence exactly 30 years ago, in 1994, when the UN General Assembly Resolution on the International Year of the Family was carefully pushed through, and although it didn’t bring dramatic change, it is an anchor that still holds today.

Even UNESCO’s compelling and visionary “Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace,” leading up to the new millennium, failed to recognize the family as a critical part of the plan. This omission blocked further research and evidence of the significant role that motherhood or parenthood absolutely does play in securing and sustaining a peace culture. The United Nations’ Development Goals, both sets, with much input from experts, only very begrudgingly point out what many versed in “local knowledge” see as the obvious root and paradigm for peace: the family.



Panelists at a Roundtable on the Protection of the Family during a side event at the 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, June 23, 2016.

Women's Federation for World Peace International, with partners, has organized hundreds of conferences, statements, campaigns and events, in and outside of the United Nations, aimed at bringing great minds and hearts together to rediscover the value of the family. Yet there was always a ceiling that was so difficult to penetrate.

### Research Captures Experts' Attention

In 2014, WFWPI held an event at the Human Rights Council on "The Family: Protecting Children's Rights and Health," with the World Health Organization. WFWPI invited the President of WFWP-India as a speaker. She had just been appointed by the Indian government as chairperson of the Special Task Force and Special Study Expert Committee on Rape, Trafficking and Violence Against Women, following the shocking stories of rape that had made their way to international media outlets.

WFWPI hosted a briefing with government experts in Geneva, mostly from Europe and the United States, who were clearly very enthusiastic to be privy to this information. As she went through her report, involving interviews with rape victims and perpetrators, they took copious notes. She began to explain that in each case the circumstances of the perpetrators, from growing up in a brothel to other abandonment and abusive circumstances, had led her to the conclusion that the health of the family, especially in early childhood, was critical to prevention of violence. With the mention of the word "family," like a knee-jerk reaction, all present abruptly stopped taking notes. It was as if her unacceptable conclusion erased everything she had said up until that moment.

It was a startling discovery, but was followed by a clear realization that repetition can work. Some of the same government experts

attended the WFWPI side event a few hours later, listening to the same conclusion by the same chairperson of the Task Force on Rape. But differently than before, as they listened for the second time, it was obvious that they opened a small window for reconsideration, and one even dared to pose a question in relation to that.

### Emerging New Opportunities

The door has again opened for reconsideration of the significance of the family, aided by frontrunners like our neighbor in Vienna, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Their Family First Program and Family United: Universal Family Skills Program promoted evidence of prevention of negative social outcomes by strengthening families, when it was far from popular. They backed this up with a series of training programs and workshops that each time brought further evidence.

In Geneva's international institutions, there has also been a shift toward acknowledging the family: UNICEF's program supporting families; the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and family reunification; the International Labor Organization (ILO) and family friendly policies for workers. One of the first and most striking breakthroughs was on June 25, 2014. After long debates, the text worked and reworked, with losses and gains on both sides, the first Human Rights Council "Protection of the Family" resolution was adopted: 26 to 14. The intensity in the air at the final vote was palpable.

The opponents said that individuals in families, not families themselves, needed to be protected from abuse, and lamented the missing list of modern forms of families. The agreed resolution, leaving room for further clarification, stated that "the family



*UPF and WFPW representatives celebrate International Day of Families 2019 at the World Council of Churches with its general secretary and interfaith department director.*

is the natural and fundamental group unit of society” (as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and as it is “the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members (it should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community.” Although some criticized it as too weak, many pro-family advocates rejoiced, in part for the wording it managed to keep out.

However, it left a fragile and cautious environment. The UN Missions that are members of the Friends of the Family group in Geneva, along with their counterparts in civil society, stepped back a little, deciding to change strategy. The debate around the composition of the family was put on hold. The next four in the series of “Protection of the Family” resolutions\* focused on consensus-building for the inclusion of family as a critical institution for social protections and problem-solving.

On September 25, 2024, there was a session at the 57th Human Rights Council on “States’ obligations on the role of the family in supporting the human rights of its members.” Forty-four speakers, from many governments, UN agencies and NGOs, took the floor following the panel debate, showing a tremendous desire to support the prioritization of the family, and offer advice.

There are priorities of family advocacy that have been set aside in the difficult negotiations to put family back in the global agenda at all, but which cannot be forgotten. There seems to be a new window of opportunity to safeguard core elements of family values, as many new unproven ideas are being tested. When faith communities and like-minded NGOs can build new alliances, and advocate wisely and convincingly for the family, without bullying or judgement, an unprecedented opportunity for a dramatic positive shift awaits.

*– Carolyn Handschin-Moser is vice president of Women’s Federation for World Peace International, and director of WFWPI’s Offices for United Nations Relations in Geneva.*

\* UN Protection of the Family Resolutions:

1. A/HRC/RES/26/11) PROTECTION OF THE FAMILY June 10, 2014 (vote 26,14,6) bringing family back to center.
2. A/HRC/RES/29/22 PROTECTION OF THE FAMILY July 2015, contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, through its role in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development.
3. A/HRC/RES/32/23, PROTECTION OF THE FAMILY, June 13, 2016, role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of human rights of persons with disabilities.
4. A/HRC/RES/35/13, PROTECTION OF THE FAMILY, June 6, 2017, role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of human rights of older persons.
5. A/HRC/RES/49/20, Rights of the Child and Family Reunification, April 1, 2022, child rights-based guiding principles and a global strategy for family reunification.

# Peace Proposals for the Asia-Pacific

By *Kahee Dhakal*

At a conference at UN headquarters in New York on May 23, 2024, UPF introduced three key projects to advance peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region. About 100 people, including UN ambassadors, NGO leaders, and representatives of women's and youth groups, attended the event, with the theme "Peace and Prosperity in the Asia-Pacific Region: Toward Greater Unity and Cooperation."

Mrs. Lynn Walsh, director of the UPF Office of the Family, served as the MC at the luncheon, which was hosted by UPF-USA. In his welcoming remarks Dr. Michael Jenkins, president of UPF-International, explained that UPF has actively supported the United Nations' four key pillars – peace and security, human rights, rule of law, and development – in all continents of the world.

"The Asia-Pacific is a central region of the world when it comes to maintaining peace and security. We have a vision for an Asia-Pacific Union Forum that exists to promote dialogue among nations and between faith communities and NGOs," he said:

Dr. Jenkins added, "We are grateful for the many permanent representatives of the missions to the UN, for their active roles in promoting dialogue and understanding between nations that are antagonistic to one another. The UN's role is critical in advancing good communications that lead away from war. The reason we chose 'Peace and Prosperity in the Asia Pacific' as the title of our forum is because peace among nations, even when they have differences, is fundamentally necessary to allow the stability that will enable prosperity to manifest."



*Dr. Michael Jenkins, president of UPF-International*



*Former Philippines Ambassador to the UN Dr. Mario Lopez de Leon (front left) and Philippines Consul General Senen T. Mangalile (right)*

## Concrete Plans to Advance Peace

Dr. Charles S. Yang, chairman of UPF-International, gave the keynote speech. He first expressed his appreciation to the United Nations for its support to his country at a time of need. "As a Korean, I always deeply appreciate the UN, and those nations that sent their finest young men and women to defend South Korea during the Korean War, so that it could emerge as one of the leading democratic nations of the world," he said. "Without the support of the United Nations, the Republic of Korea would not exist today."

He went on to suggest that the United Nations could be instrumental in resolving the current state of tension that persists on the Korean Peninsula, by setting up a UN Peace Park in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that separates North and South Korea. He also proposed that this would be a strategic location for a fifth official UN Office.

"The UN currently has four official offices, but none is located in Asia, the most populous region of the world," he pointed out. "A UN Office based in Korea would provide a strong incentive for cooperation, and eventual unification, on the peninsula. It would also be well positioned to deal with security and development issues in the Asia-Pacific region."

Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, regional chair of UPF-Asia-Pacific and a member of Parliament of Nepal, then introduced UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's proposal to establish an Asia Pacific Union. This would be a broad-based, independent, non-political body that draws together like-minded individuals and organizations, including government bodies,



*Dr. Charles S. Yang, chairman of UPF-International*



*Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, regional chair of UPF-Asia-Pacific and member of Parliament of Nepal*

NGOs and civil society groups, from Asia-Pacific nations. Mr. Dhakal stressed that Asian values – which include an emphasis on family, filial piety and faith as well as an inclination toward cooperation, balance and harmony – can support collective growth and development in the region.

A number of diplomats expressed support for these proposals, and their shared commitment to cooperation for peace and mutual prosperity among Asia-Pacific nations.

H.E. Mr. Tithiarun Mao, deputy permanent representative of Cambodia to the United Nations, voiced his country's commitment to developing regional cooperation, trust and progress. He also expressed thanks for Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's recognition of Prime Minister Hun Sen with the 2022 Sun Hak Peace Prize Founder's Award.

H.E. Ms. Rebecca Bryant, deputy permanent representative of Australia, explained the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, adopted by Pacific islands, including her country, to advance regional stability and security. She said that Australia values partnerships, collective action, and a shared regional vision, is a strong ally of democratic nations, and supports economic development to ensure peace.

Ambassador Isaiah Chabala, former permanent representative of Zambia to the United Nations and the European Union, highlighted the global significance of nurturing a strong and powerful Asia Pacific Union, to serve as a



*H.E. Mr. Tithiarun Mao, deputy permanent representative of Cambodia to the United Nations*



*H.E. Ms. Rebecca Bryant, deputy permanent representative of Australia to the United Nations*

model and guiding light for reconciliation and unity in the quest for world peace.

H.E. Mr. Mohan Peiris, permanent representative of Sri Lanka, referred to the Buddhist practices of cultivating ethical behavior, mental clarity and compassion, and taking action towards peace and prosperity. He highlighted Sri Lanka's role in supporting the peace processes of neighboring countries, including Nepal and Myanmar. He shared the historical challenges his country has faced with different communities, but said that through it all, they have achieved unity. He also expressed the hope that the United States would take a more active leadership role in the region.

Dr. Chameera Yapa Abeywardena, foreign affairs secretary of the Speakers Bureau of the Sri Lankan Parliament, expressed his appreciation for UPF's work in his country, and introduced his father, the speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, who sent a recorded message. Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena said that his country values regional cooperation and collaboration, and looks forward to working with UPF and neighbor countries towards mutual prosperity.

Miss Universe Nepal 2017, Ms. Nagma Shrestha, portrayed women's unique role in promoting peace and prosperity. "Our nurturing nature, our resilience, and our ability to empathize make us natural peacemakers," she said. "By embracing our innate qualities and leading by example, we can inspire others to follow suit."

– Kahee Dhakal is assistant to the regional chair of UPF-Asia-Pacific.



*H.E. Mr. Mohan Peiris, permanent representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations*



*Ms. Nagma Shrestha, Miss Universe Nepal 2017*

# Keeping the Faith in International Affairs

By *UPF International*

Ahead of the Summit of the Future, various civil society and faith-based groups held meetings to coordinate their input on the issues to be addressed by world leaders. The Interfaith Coalition Conference for Global Citizens (ICCGC) and the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) held such an event at the UN Church Center in New York on August 26 and 27, 2024. It was a significant assembly, attended by more than 300 high-level representatives of various NGOs, as well as highly respected religious and academic leaders.

Embracing the theme “Global Action on Peace, Sustainability and Prosperity,” conference speakers sought to depict a world where peace is the bedrock of the global community, environmental stewardship is a universal commitment, and prosperity is shared by all, regardless of geography or background. It was a call to action for everyone to contribute to a legacy of harmony, sustainability, and shared wealth for future generations.

With CoNGO President Dr. Liberato Bautista presiding, the program featured keynote speeches, panel discussions, and networking

opportunities. Themes included ethical leadership, social justice, environmental stewardship, and global governance within the context of interfaith and civic values, engagement and action principles.

## Global Ethics and Global Citizenship

The first panel discussed the notions of global ethics and global citizenship. Speakers voiced the view that a consensus on these concepts is not only possible, but essential if the world is to attain a state of sustainable peace. Dr. Kusumita P. Pedersen, professor emerita of religious studies at St. Francis College, New York, stated:

“Ethics is a human universal. All human cultures distinguish right from wrong and recognize in their worldviews the difference between good and evil. Also, all human societies have teachings guiding action in terms of moral values: affirming the norm of reciprocity, calling for kindness and doing good to others, and forbidding wanton violence and harm. The existence of shared moral norms in the world’s culture has been confirmed by extensive historical and social scientific research.”



*CoNGO President Dr. Liberato Bautista*



*Panel discussion.*





*UPF representatives with Dr. Bautista.*

Dr. Kwangsoo Park, professor emeritus of Won-Buddhism at Wonkwang University, added:

“In contemporary civil society, the term ‘global citizenship’ has evolved beyond the traditional notion of ‘citizen,’ advocating for a broader commitment to international cooperation ... As we deepen our capacity to understand and embrace one another, we transcend the superficial notion of neighbors as mere geographic entities. Instead, we come to recognize them as essential members of a broader human family, our spiritual kin. This transformation is more than an intellectual exercise; it represents a profound emotional and moral awakening that compels us to broaden our circles of empathy and compassion.”

### **Towards a Global Peace**

A panel on global peace discussed conflict resolution strategies, the impact of cultural diplomacy, and how each sector can contribute to a harmonious world. In this session, Mr. Garry Jacobs, president and CEO of the World Academy of Art & Science, introduced a novel approach he called a “peace offensive”:

“The concept of a ‘peace offensive’ is grounded in the philosophy of mutual concessions and strategic initiatives and offers a viable

path forward in resolving protracted crises. It is founded on the premise that there is scope for positive progress between parties to conflict when they recognize the legitimacy of reciprocal initiatives for compromise. It calls for unilateral, symbolic gestures to encourage reciprocal actions in response. It aims to transform adversarial dynamics into collaborative relationships, even amidst the most entrenched conflicts. It seeks to demonstrate how unilateral concessions can serve as catalysts for meaningful dialogue and peacebuilding.”

Other sessions addressed dialogue between religions and civil society, climate action, and educating future generations. At its conclusion, the conference issued a Consensus Declaration. Its final paragraph states:

“A profound and transformative spirituality is urgently needed in today’s world – one that religious institutions and civil society have both the duty and capacity to develop and nurture. Prioritizing children’s and youth’s rights and empowering their active participation in society is essential, as their perspectives and unique needs are fundamental to securing a sustainable future. Our commitment to this cause is not just for the present but for our countless future generations who will live in the world we create today.”

*– Universal Peace Federation staff compiled this report.*

# Transforming Global Governance – the Pact for the Future

*By United Families International*

After months and months of negotiations, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the new Pact for the Future on September 22. Promoted as UN 2.0, an effort to “transform global governance,” this Pact has elicited mixed emotions, with some expressing elation and relief at its passage and others expressing deep concern.

Prior to formal adoption, a representative of the Russian Federation, in opposition to the Pact for the Future, offered an amendment that said, “the United Nations shall be driven by intergovernmental decision-making process and that the United Nations and its system shall not intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State as provided in Article 2 (7) of the Charter of the United Nations.”

However, before this amendment was voted on, a representative of the Republic of the Congo, speaking for the African Group, proposed a motion that “no action be taken on the draft amendment.” That motion was adopted by a recorded vote of 143 in favor to 7 against (Belarus, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syria), with 15 abstentions. After that vote, the Pact for the Future was then formally adopted.

There is debate as to whether or not the Pact for the Future should be considered a “consensus” document. We can also speculate on which countries comprised the 15 abstentions and

their reasoning for doing so. But we do know what President Javier Milei of the Argentine Republic said in an impassioned speech, post adoption, to the General Assembly:

“If the United Nations wants to resume the principles that led to its birth, and adopt the role for which it was designed, it can count on the full support of Argentina in its struggle for freedom. You should be aware, though, that Argentina will not support any policy that implies restricting individual or trade freedoms, nor the violation of natural rights of individuals – regardless of who promotes these, or how big the consensus is in this institution.

“For this reason, I would like to officially express our dissent on the Pact for the Future that was signed on Sunday, and I invite all nations of the free world to support us. Not only in relation to this Pact but also in the establishment of a new agenda for this noble institution – that is the agenda for freedom.”

Pres. Milei’s full speech is worth the read. In the United States, several strong national conservative organizations issued warnings about the Pact for the Future. The Heritage Foundation said, “Although the Pact for the Future will not be legally binding, it will subsequently be referenced and characterized in UN documents and resolutions as a commitment that all governments will be pressed to honor.” Eagle Forum sent out a message to members all across the country to, “Tell Your Representative to Stand for Sovereignty.”

## The Pact for the Future: Examples of the Good and the Not Good

### SOVEREIGNTY

United Families International has been involved in lobbying at the United Nations for 29 years. Protecting our national sovereignty has always been an important issue. Over the years UFI has opposed mandatory language, preferring language that gives options to the Member States. In this Pact, UFI promoted the words “for the consideration of Member States,” after strong proposals that could threaten sovereignty. As a result, four paragraphs in the Pact do include the “consideration” phrase, and there is even stronger language in paragraph 32:

“We reiterate our full respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States, the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and our obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, our commitment to settle international disputes by peaceful means.”

### FAMILY

In recent years, at the United Nations, it has been very difficult to get language included that recognizes the family, even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 16-3) states that, “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.” We are happy to report that the Pact actually has six places where “family” or “families” is mentioned:

60 (f) Implement **family-friendly and family-oriented policies** that support the social and economic development of children and young people so that they can reach their full potential and enjoy their human rights.

61 (f) Strengthen intergenerational partnerships and solidarity among generations by promoting opportunities for voluntary, constructive and regular interaction between **young and older persons in their families**, workplaces and in society at large.



4. The promotion of intergenerational solidarity, as well as intergenerational dialogue, and social cohesion is an indispensable part of the foundation for the prosperity of future generations and, in this regard, **the role of families and family-friendly and family-oriented policies as contributors to sustainable development must be recognized.**

## PARENTAL RIGHTS

The Pact for the Future includes two documents that were negotiated separately. Annex I is the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and Annex II is the Declaration on Future Generations. We are deeply concerned with the number of times the GDC refers to the “rights of the child.”

During negotiations, UFI promoted using the words from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 18-2, which says, **“recognizing that parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child.”**

We were not successful in getting that language included in the text, but there is a reference to the treaty in the following paragraphs of the GDC:

31 (b) Prioritize the development and implementation of national online child safety policies and standards, in compliance with international human rights law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (SDGs 3, 5 and 10);

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also has good language that can be referenced to focus on the important role of parents in the education of their children.

**“Parents have a prior right** to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.” (Universal Declaration, Article 26-3)

## HUMAN LIFE

Over the years, we have worked hard to protect human life. There is a phrase that is often used to promote abortion in UN documents: “sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights” (SRHR). We were NOT able to get that phrase removed from paragraph 27 (f) of the Pact.

27 (f) Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

You will note that this paragraph refers to both the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action. In both of those documents there is a paragraph that states that **“In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning”** (8.25 in ICPD and 106-k in Beijing). It is important that these conference outcome documents are always referenced.

## 2030 AGENDA

The entire Pact for the Future is designed to “turbocharge” implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. United Families International has been actively promoting family involvement to achieve the SDGs, since 2016 – with the publishing of our book, Family Capital and the SDGs, which provides “best practice” examples of families, throughout the world, achieving the SDGs.

This year UFI also co-sponsored a special event during UN Action Days, September 20, titled “Raising Hope for Indigenous Families – An Intergenerational Approach to Prosperity.” We combined efforts with Universal Peace Federation, Big Ocean Women, Native American Fatherhood and Family Association, and Welcome Hand to present solutions for:

- SDG 1 – Overcoming poverty
- SDG 2 – Doubling agricultural production and overcoming hunger
- SDG 3 – Prevention and treatment of substance abuse
- SDG 4 – Early childhood development among indigenous people
- SDG 15 – Restoring degraded land and soil

The event was presented in New York City at the Uganda House for both in-person and virtual attendance.

## WORLD FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Fourteen paragraphs of the Pact include the words, “reform of the international financial architecture.” This is probably the most dangerous part of the effort to “transform global governance.” The United Nations is currently dependent upon member states to provide funds, but there is a continual effort to devise a way to collect money, internationally. One hundred and fifteen paragraphs of the Pact include the words “finance” or “financial,” including:

79 (d) Promote financial stability through international cooperation on, and **consistent regulation of, banks and other financial service entities.**

Action 51. We will accelerate the **reform of the international financial architecture** to strengthen its capacity to support developing countries more effectively and equitably during **systemic shocks** and make the financial system more stable. [Ask yourself, who gets to determine the definition of “systemic shocks” – the UN Secretary General?]

## Looking to the Future

Many developing countries are supporting the Pact for the Future with the hope that this new global governance and reform of international financing will provide increased funds for them to achieve the sustainable development goals. If they are not very careful, they will lose their sovereignty in the process.

Pres. Melei of Argentina recognized this potential when he said, “The 2030 Agenda, although well-intentioned in its goals, is nothing more than a supranational government program, socialist in nature, which seeks to solve the problems of modernity with solutions that violate the sovereignty of nation states and violate people’s right to life, right to freedom and property of persons.”

– *United Families International is a US nonprofit organization dedicated to helping families flourish through shaping laws, policies, opinions and lives. This article was written collaboratively by UFI staff.*



# Could a UN Office in the Korean DMZ Stabilize the Region?

By *Humphrey Hawksley*



We have little doubt that the world is becoming more polarized and dangerous.

Authoritarian powers, led by China and Russia, are trying to break the United States' control of the international system, while the West sounds constant drum rolls that its democratic values are under threat.

There is much talk of encroaching war.

Borders and sovereignty are being challenged, as in Ukraine, with echoes of the 1930s or earlier last century, pre-war eras that led to lives being torn apart in two horrific bouts of international bloodshed.

Geographically, one stretch of land above all symbolizes the acrimonious rivalry we are tasting today and – possibly – a way forward that prioritizes unity above discord.

This place is the Korean Demilitarized Zone, a buffer strip 160 miles long and two and a half miles wide that was created after a ceasefire halted the Korean War in 1953. That conflict, costing some two million lives, ended in a stalemate which continues today amid routine warnings that this flashpoint could erupt again at any time.

## Breaking the Stalemate

One way forward, quietly suggested over the past decade, is that the United Nations constructs a new Asian headquarters between these two hostile nations inside the DMZ itself.

In 1953, seventeen governments signed up to the UN Command Security Battalion, which

controls the DMZ. If the United Nations opened a headquarters there, 193 member states would be involved, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, representing voices from both sides of today's arguments over values and systems of governance.

The Korean War was the first where troops fought under the banner of the UN, which was then in its infancy. It is, therefore, apt that this becomes a site where deadlocks could be broken.

The proposal was first raised informally in September 2014 at the UN General Assembly by South Korea's then President Park Guen-hye. South Korean officials made a lower-key, more detailed presentation later that year at a one-day peace and security conference in Geneva.

In 2018, President Moon Jae-in repeated the idea, stressing that the building would be a monument toward world peace, symbolizing reconciliation while providing a neutral space for dialogue.

The plan is to build on the western edge of the DMZ, just north of South Korea's Paju City, 30 miles from Seoul and 125 miles from Pyongyang.

Both countries would carry out the structure and design work comprising a prominent UN headquarters building within a complex of educational centers, UN agencies, hotels and conference halls.

Just five miles away is North Korea's Kaisong Industrial Complex, once a thriving factory complex employing tens of thousands of workers, mainly under South Korean management. It opened in 2004 and closed in 2016 during a downturn in relations. It could start up again.

Such an ambitious peace project would breathe fresh life into the United Nations. Setting it in a flashpoint for war would underpin UN relevancy while taking advantage of the growing economy and influence of the Asian region.

## A Neutral Venue for Negotiations

North Korea, supported by China, is the world's most closed and controlling dictatorship as well as being a nuclear-weapons state. South Korea, supported by the United States, is a beacon of Western-style democracy flourishing in an Asian society. Relations between North and South Korea are currently on a downturn. Both have adopted less compromising positions, while strengthening alliances and their militaries.

In the ebb and flow of north-south tensions, nothing is particularly new. But, as global tensions increase, the status quo is looking increasingly unsustainable. North Korea remains brittle, with a young, unhealthy, hereditary leader who has no natural successor. The dynasty's sudden collapse could spark a military and human catastrophe.

Although well aware of the situation, China and the United States barely discuss the Korean conundrum. With their own thorny relationship, there is certainly no joint plan to deal with a crisis.

Although the UN has regional centers, such as those in Bangkok and Addis Ababa, there are only four designated headquarters – in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.

An Asian UN headquarters in the DMZ would be the fifth, and could serve to coax North Korea from its isolation without feeling it has been defeated. Pyongyang and Seoul would be joint hosts, giving an opportunity for officials at all levels to get to know each other.

Seemingly insoluble challenges, such as the future of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, would take their place

among a broader basket of issues as diplomats in the DMZ deal with climate change, poverty alleviation and more.

Regional challenges would include the islands dispute between Japan and Russia, unresolved since 1945; conflicting sovereignty claims in the South and East China Seas; and border violence between India and China.

The Indo-Pacific arms race is of growing concern, with Asia and Oceania now accounting for thirty per cent of global military spending. South Korea suggests that the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs should be one of several to move there.

The center would become a neutral and permanent venue for negotiations which, for Asian leaders, is far easier to access than the bustle and traffic jams of faraway New York.

The cost would run in the hundreds of millions. But, whatever the final bill, it would be miniscule compared to the price of fresh conflict on the Peninsula, indeed of another war anywhere in Asia.

The sooner this vision becomes a reality, a step safer we all will be.

*– Humphrey Hawksley is the editorial director of Asian Affairs, host of the monthly Democracy Forum Debate and former BBC Asia correspondent and Beijing bureau chief. He is the author of Asian Waters: The Struggle over the Indo-Pacific and the Challenge to American Power.*



*The UN flag and the Republic of Korea flag fly side by side at the DMZ*

# Establishing Trust in a Human-Centered AI

*By Christopher Wright*



We can think of AI and where we're going with this technology as a tsunami. It reminds me of those videos from Japan when that big tsunami came and people were standing on the beach when all the water went out to sea, and everybody's marveling, "Wow, you can see the rocks and starfish!" Meanwhile the tsunami's building and ready to come onshore. We're at that kind of moment right now, where we're noticing all the amazing things that AI can do, but we're really not understanding the full impact of where this goes.

We are all leaders today in artificial intelligence. Our decisions collectively, as humans that are alive during this period, will impact the future of all humans. So it's really critical that we understand the pros and cons of this technology, and ensure that we're building a bright future, because, like with any technology, it has the potential to do good or bad, and we want to keep it on the good side.

The future that globalist leaders want is one with lots of AI robots, drones, and an AI surveillance system that can keep track of who's who and what's what and ultimately solve crime. The globalist agenda includes a social credit score system. That's what got me to start the AI Trust Council. I could see that we need some trusted people to help figure out what's real and what's fake, and also help weigh in on this AI future that we're moving into.

The main drivers for AI development today are the profit motive and the power motive. This technology is a game changer. It will transform

our existence. It will upend our purpose. But, are we going to focus on the human race, in making sure that AI serves us collectively?

## The Many Uses of AI

The future of warfare is AI warfare. Instead of soldiers fighting, you're going to have robots fighting. Whoever holds superior technology will have the upper hand. The trend is large swarms of drones, up to 10,000 at a time, that will be deployed in a battle to attack targets. Instead of helicopters and tanks, you'll have lots of little drones with the ability to take human life, but it's all done by algorithm, meaning there is no human making that final kill decision to destroy a target. That is now being outsourced to artificial intelligence.

In the United States we're more concerned with ethics than a lot of other countries, so we have policies in place to maintain a human in the loop. But that is not the case with other militaries. They're actually outsourcing these decisions to AI, keeping the human out of it completely.

AI is not just warfare, it's chemical, biological, mental and physical. On the chemical side, you can imagine a team of 10,000 PhD chemists working 24/7 on a problem; that's the equivalent of what AI is doing today. A novice can create different types of chemical compounds and molecular structures that are previously unknown. They did a test in Switzerland to see how many chemical compounds an AI system could come up with. They put it into toxic mode, and in six hours this device created 40,000 variants of the VX nerve gas, the most toxic substance on earth, and some of those substances were completely unknown to science. They were actually more deadly than VX nerve gas.



The same type of manipulation is happening on the biological side, with the ability to edit genetics through CRISPR technology. There are a lot of benefits to this technology, you can actually eliminate a lot of different types of diseases. Ultimately, one of the ideas is that aging can be cured. They're looking at 2030 as the time frame when that might happen. Really, anti-aging technology is coming. That will have a lot of societal impacts, on population growth and other things. It will transform biological science. But you can imagine, on the bad actor side, that can be really dangerous.

### Benefits and Dangers to AI Consumers

As a consumer, one of the biggest things you'll see right away is the mental impact of AI. It's about what is real and what is fake. Most folks who spend a lot of time online have seen videos where it's really difficult to figure out what is real and what is fake. By next year, about 90% of web traffic is expected to be AI generated.

In terms of entertainment, by 2026 we can expect a full-length Hollywood-style feature film created with AI. It's still up to the human to create prompts and say that you want a movie like a Western, or whatever characteristics you want. But the creativity space is the epicenter of AI's strength.

AI is not really creating, it's just rehashing what it finds in the data set, but it's getting more convincing. It has the ability to understand environments and see patterns. It can identify patterns that humans have never thought of. It can exploit those and appear creative, but all it's doing is understanding different patterns.

AI will never have its own consciousness, but it can mimic that. It will never have real human traits but it will be extremely good at convincing us that it does. It will become

**“ This technology is a game changer. It will transform our existence. It will upend our purpose. ”**

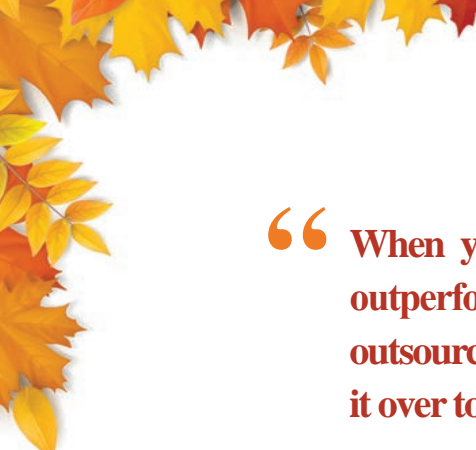
very difficult to tell. It will look, act and feel just like a human. In the mental health space, on one hand it can really hurt mental health, but on the other hand it can actually help mental health if you have AI systems that are thoughtfully created and managed.

AI agents are able to learn, they're situationally aware, they can solve problems, they can reason, they can do long-term studies and evaluations and think deeply about problems to come up with very smart solutions. When you apply AI to a problem, it can outthink and outperform a human in almost anything.

That creates a worthlessness issue for humans. When you have bosses that can replicate most jobs with an AI agent, or with actual robotics, it transforms the workplace and actually it transforms society.



ChatGPT-generated image of an AI-centric future.



**“ When you apply AI to a problem, it can outthink and outperform a human in almost anything ... Do we want to outsource our thought and complex reasoning and just give it over to these technologies? ”**

One of the terms that's going around now is "post-labor economics." That means there is no human workforce. Then what are we going to do with all these humans that need some sort of purpose? How do we solve the income problem, how do we solve the human purpose problem? That gets into questions of what is truth? What is real?

We have to decide, do we want to outsource our thought and complex reasoning and just give it over to these technologies? Or do we maintain our own systems and improve our own education to ensure that we're smart enough to handle things?

### **AI and the Concentration of Power**

One of the goals of the UN Agenda 2030 is to have smart cities that will integrate artificial intelligence into policing. You can carry that on to social credit scoring and digital IDs. Whoever or whatever government is in charge of AI has a massively powerful tool of control for the population, and that's what's coming. We can already see symptoms of this today.

AI is going to create a different world. It's going to disrupt truth, it's going to disrupt our democracies, it's going to cause a concentration of power with whoever wields this AI technology.

Currently we don't have much in terms of AI safety and government leadership. There's the AI Act in Europe that just went into effect

in August, but it doesn't fully get its teeth for about another year. The AI Act addresses a lot of things, but it leaves gaping holes in policy and safety. Instead of safety, companies are moving towards profit and market dominance.

These guys in the tech industry are excited, they've got a new toy, they're building this thing and they feel like they're pioneers. Safety is left out of the conversation. Human extinction is actually listed as a risk on Open AI's website. And yet they're still moving forward with this, like a moth to a flame.

There's a key term called artificial general intelligence (AGI) that means AI has reached a point where it's generally as smart as a human. It reacts, it behaves, it looks and feels just like a human. But it's actually enhanced because it has this massive data set. Once that AGI is deployed onto your phone, they call it a digital agent, it becomes like a mirror of you. You can develop a full understanding of everything around you. It will be massively profitable to the people that develop it. But it's potentially an unbelievably damaging tool to the human brain.

We have to watch out for these tech leaders who believe in an AI god. The AI agenda is a transhumanist agenda. It's the transformation of the human body, of human 1.0, into human 2.0, which is able to interact with these extremely high IQ AI systems. They call it speciation, actually changing our species, like from a caterpillar to a butterfly. This is where big tech is taking us, this is their goal.

## What Can the Trust Council Do?

It's up to us today to decide what type of future we want. Do we want this future where AI can easily control humanity physically, mentally, emotionally? Or do we humans step up at this critical moment in human history and ensure that AI supports humanity, that we keep it as a tool, and we dominate AI?

Our company, Artificial Intelligence Trust Council, is pushing for tight control over AI, safe AI alignment and ultimately a pro-human future. We don't want social credit scores. What we want is a reputation. You pick whatever you want to broadcast to the world, but your audience gets to say, I trust this information, or I don't trust this information. If you get a reputation for being honest your information spreads. It doesn't mean you can't say things that are dishonest, but we reward people for being real and honest.

It's all about the metadata. We're trying to get people's best estimate of what is true and real and good, and connect them with advertisers so they can make money off that data. One of the big pictures is really going after big tech for data and putting it back into the hands of people.

There actually are senior leaders in tech who are okay with extinction. They're okay with depopulation, with eliminating humanity in its current form. But we outnumber those folks. There are a lot more people who are good-hearted, who want humanity to continue. It takes leadership, but all of us today are leaders in this AI space. Your voice really matters. It steers the future of humanity. We just want to make sure it goes in a positive direction.

*– Christopher Wright is CEO and founder of the AI Trust Council, which aims to restore trust and authenticity in the digital world. This article is from content shared in a webinar hosted by the International Association for Peace and Economic Development.*



ChatGPT-generated image of AI's positive and negative impacts.

# Values Education: A Moral Compass in a Challenging World

*By Dr. John Bellavance*



Imagine leaving a footprint on the sands of time, each step echoing the beliefs and values that define us. What we do, or don't do, leaves an indelible mark, shaping not just our lives, but the lives of those around us. This is

the essence of values education; it provides our young with a moral compass, a guide to navigate the complex world they inherit. As Harvard Professor Howard Gardener once said, "It's fundamentally unfair not to provide this moral framework, as it leaves our young to fend for themselves in making sense of the world."

During 2021 and 2022, UPF-Australia and the International Association of Academicians for Peace Oceania (IAAP) conducted a series of Values Education Summits online, attracting an international audience. This led to the launch of a report in September 2023, on the occasion of the United Nations International Day of Peace.

The report, "Educating with Values: A Holistic Approach to Integrating Values in Education,"

is unique, since the contributors came from academia; primary, secondary and tertiary education; and from among community and business leaders. Contributors were asked two critical questions: Why is values education important, and what should it look like in the present and future?

The findings of the summits are presented under themes such as whole child education, individual learners, community learning, service learning, global citizenship, moral education, family values, Indigenous education and others.

The report argues that three teaching and learning domains facilitate the development of values, namely: learning, wellbeing, and service – managing ourselves well, managing our relationships well and managing and caring for our natural environment well – all of which are underpinned by values education. A holistic values-based education therefore needs to foster intellectual and creative abilities, emotional and social abilities that underpin wellbeing and connection with others, and service learning through community or public



*Editors and contributors, from left: Mr. Will Abdo, Dr. John Bellavance, Dr. Shahid Yamin, Mr. Roland Jabbour, Dr. Chris Sotiropoulos.*

service that supports personal development and the common good.

The proceedings of the Values Education Summits consistently found that values education is important for the wellbeing of children, children's social and emotional development, healthy respectful relationships, student engagement with learning, reduced behavioral problems, and better learning outcomes, as well as for community harmony.

The launch of the report was accompanied by a brief video promoting the key messages of the report, which was circulated to members of Parliament and other levels of government in Australia. A media release was also issued, leading to several positive media reports in the Herald Sun (Melbourne), The Adelaide Advertiser, the Educator Magazine Australia and the Australian Arabic Council. At the conclusion of this major endeavour, reflections on the potential for a new and broader project began, sprouting from the seeds sown by the completed initiative.

### **The Broader Scope of Values Education**

Many organizations have focused their efforts at values education in primary and secondary schools. However, it is clear that values that are fostered in school are often not reflected in society at large. Hence, there is a disconnect between what young people learn and what they experience in society. For this reason, the scope of a values renaissance must be broad, including tertiary education, government, business, media, faith traditions, arts and culture, and the family.

We have an opportunity to work together for the benefit of learners, their families, and the broader community, to renew and act upon our shared universal values in a rapidly changing environment to secure a cohesive, harmonious and sustainable future.

While societal values are constantly changing, influenced by a wide range of factors, including all forms of media, cultural shifts, political

**“ It’s fundamentally unfair not to provide this moral framework, as it leaves our young to fend for themselves in making sense of the world. ”**

*– Dr. Howard Gardener,  
Harvard Graduate School of Education*

developments, world events, and generational differences, there are certain enduring, universal values that have maintained stability and harmony across the millennia. These are values such as love, meaning, purpose, connection, justice, freedom, mutual respect, care, compassion, honesty, and integrity.

### **The Next Step - Going Global**

Many organizations have been working to foster values education, and there is a renewed call for a global “values renaissance.” To support this, we proposed the formation of an international group of writers to create a world-class values education program that will target senior high school children and adults.

This program is now in a first draft: “Six Pillars Framework for Wellbeing, Positive Relationships, and a Sustainable Future.” The current reach and work of our networks and organizations includes Australia, the United Kingdom, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Thailand, the Philippines, Greece, India, Somalia, Palau, Kiribati, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia and the United States.

Values education is not just about imparting knowledge. It's about shaping individuals who respect themselves and others, who understand the interconnectedness of the world, and who are ready to contribute to the common good. It's about preparing our young, not just for the world of work, but for the work of the world. As we tread the sands of time, let us ensure that our footprints echo the values we cherish, the values that we want to pass on to our young.

*– Dr. John Bellavance is the Oceania coordinator for the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) and vice-president of UPF-Australia. He is the lead editor of the Six Pillars Framework project.*

# Interdependence: Working Cooperatively for the Greater Good

By *Dr. Franco Famularo*



Since antiquity, humanity has desired and longed for peace – on a global and national level, among local communities and within nuclear and extended families. However, no individual can create peace alone.

The 17th century English poet, John Donne, expressed it well in his poem: “No man is an island.”

A more modern motto states: “Peace Starts with Me.” Yet those who strive for inner peace understand well that harmony requires collaboration and interaction in relation to others. This leads to the concept of interdependence, which is a value worth exploring.

The Universal Peace Federation mission statement is as follows:

“We envision a world of permanent peace, home to a harmonious global community, based on interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values.” It further elaborates the concept of interdependence as “living and working cooperatively while striving to meet one another’s material and spiritual needs.”

Generally, interdependence is viewed from an economic perspective; one often reads of interdependent supply chains, integrated economic exchange and the dependence of one economy on another. A good example is the nature of the global economy, where countries such as China and the United States have economies that are significantly intertwined with each other, which makes it difficult

for them to engage in traditional warfare or serious conflict, as the consequences can severely hurt both countries.

## Historical Values Laid the Foundation

Thought leaders throughout history have considered values similar to “interdependence” in a variety of contexts.

One of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment, the 17th century English philosopher and physician, John Locke, referred to life, liberty and the right to private property as “natural” rights of all human beings. The founders of the United States provided a variation in the well-known phrase from the Declaration of Independence, declaring that “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” are unalienable rights. Many countries of the Commonwealth refer to “peace, order and good government” as core values of governance, and some, such as Canada, also refer to life, liberty and the security of the person.

The French, since the revolution of 1789, called for “Liberté, Fraternité, Egalité” (liberty, fraternity and equality), while the lyrics of the German national anthem proclaim “Einigkeit, Recht und Freiheit” (unity, justice and freedom). Nigeria refers to five national ethics – human dignity, voice and participation, personal responsibility, integrity, national unity and professionalism.

Each of these refers to a national ideal, but to ensure world peace, they must be extended to the international community.

**“ If there is to be a path to peace, interdependence requires that human beings overcome the view that ‘others’ are one’s enemy. Viewing others as part of the team, or as potential partners, is key. ”**

## **We All Share One Planet**

Human beings all share the Earth, where the actions of one inevitably impact others. Polluting rivers or the air that we breathe in one geographic zone can easily spill over into another. Infectious diseases are another example, as was made evident during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. With increasing travel, global trade, integrated supply chains, international marriage and increased emigration due to economic, political or family reasons, collaboration and respect for our neighbors is essential.

There are multiple examples of economic interdependence. For example, co-operatives, joint ownership of property and housing, ownership of common shares in companies, joint ventures in business, and more. Whether one speaks of a free market economy, a centralized socialistic command economy, or a mix of both economic platforms, there are always challenges due to corruption and the fact that human beings have moral failings. People can be selfish, can lie, cheat or treat their fellow human beings unrighteously.

Also, we live in an age of digital interdependence. Digital technologies have improved

global communications and interactions, but as powerful new technologies emerge, we must consider how to cooperate to ensure they are not misused. As a UN High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation stated in 2019, “Such cooperation must be grounded in common human values – such as inclusiveness, respect, human-centeredness, human rights, international law, transparency and sustainability ... these shared values must be a common light which helps guide us.”

Interdependence in the realm of peace building impacts every facet of life: religious, political, economic, media, the arts, etc. If there is to be a path to peace, interdependence requires that human beings overcome the view that “others” are one’s enemy. Viewing others as part of the team, or as potential partners, is key. The phrase “one family under God” expresses the ideal that we are all interconnected and dependent on each other.

Therefore, UPF promotes interdependence as one of its three core values, the others being mutual prosperity and universal values, as the basis for global peace.

*- Dr. Franco Famularo is president of UPF-Canada*



# Human Nature, Moral Direction and the Family

By *Marco Respinti*



Two concepts coming from the United Nations, and having the authority of the United Nations, serve my purpose in discussing the topic of the family.

The first is penned by the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Elaborating upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it defines “human rights” in the following terms: “Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings – they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental – the right to life – to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty.”

The second concept is contained in the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself, where the whole of mankind is defined as the “human family.” It is indeed a noble and revealing metaphor.

**“All people of goodwill ... should come together to defend the family”**

These two concepts are intimately intertwined, and I want to correlate one to the other. These circumstances continually give rise to conflicts, which tragically manifest in clashes and bloodshed.

## Human nature includes human rights

The human rights language used by the United Nations in the first quote I offered comes from a long and deep philosophical tradition and acknowledges a fact. Human beings possess a given nature, which entitles them to inalienable rights that no one has the authority or the ability to take away no matter how much power one may have. Their implementation can be curtailed in practice and their essence denied in theory, but they can never be eradicated. They in fact define what human beings are.

Even if the language used by the UN belongs to the Western philosophical tradition, the reality that the words enshrine, and their value, are universal. It couldn't be otherwise for the supranational organization that assembles all nations of the Earth and adopts a document that is universal in its essence. The reason is again simple: that language, the reality it conveys, and the values it communicates stem from and deal with the universal human nature, which is the source and rationale of the only equality possible among humans.

Now, the society made of human beings who bear inalienable human rights is called by the United Nations the “human family.” This is another instance of an old and deep language. It comes from the idea that humans are brothers and sisters, because they are all sons and daughters of the same mother and of the same father. It is not the 15 minutes of fame of the do-gooders: it is what makes humans part of the same flock in the most secular and yet religious, or universal, language.



## Human nature develops in the family

It is then clear that the family – acknowledged in Article 16 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights when it writes, "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family" – is the first environment to which a human being is exposed, at both an ontological and chronological level.

The family is the place where human beings fully discover their human nature. Human nature is there from their conception, but humans learn it, with all its implications, step by step. In sum, the family is the first and the most important school of human nature, then of human rights.

Good education in schools aims to empower pupils, from a tender age, with the intellectual and moral tools needed to discover their own selves. Schools should never take over the parents' role. Instead, schools should flank the educational role of families, and help sustain them, always respecting the parents' prerogatives.

There is in fact only one place where human beings can learn why it is fundamental to always and everywhere defend human rights. That place is the family, because in a family children are taught, through example and moral direction, to become adults through the discovery and appreciation of their own intangible human nature, therefore of human

rights. This is why it all starts with the defense of the right of the family.

But a family it is not whatever we call by that name. It is the fundamental place where a person is educated by a mother, a father and possibly siblings with no coercion or curtailing. Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says it in the most perfect way: "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society." For this reason, the article continues, it is "entitled to protection by society and the State."

All people of goodwill, from all walks of life, and belonging to any religious, spiritual, cultural, moral, or philosophical tradition or background, should come together to defend the family. After millennia, it is still the only way humans know to train the rising generation to defend their fellow humans. The Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights precisely says that "[...] recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

To say it briefly: no family, no human rights; no family, no freedom, justice and peace. It is that simple and it is that difficult, in a world which is trying to disarrange all the natural elements of humanity.

– *Marco Respinti is an Italian professional journalist, editor-in-chief of International Family News, member of the International Federation of Journalists, essayist, translator, and lecturer. This article is extracted from a paper he presented at a conference on "The Role of Parents in Creating a Peaceful and More Secure Society and World," at UN Palace, Geneva, on June 1, 2023, celebrating the Global Day of Parents.*



# Samoan High Schools Test Character-based Curriculum

By Dr. Jacinta Moreau

In Samoa, quality education has been identified as a key priority area for improved social development, and the government has committed itself to “ensure that school curricula and syllabi are kept in line with needs and good practice.” The Education Sector Plan posits that education and training can be made more relevant to national needs by helping to develop healthy, well-balanced citizens as well as achieve good employment outcomes.

This resonates with UPF’s philosophy that the role of education is to help youth become better and happier people, while at the same time acquiring technical expertise to serve their community or nation to the best of their abilities. Since 2023, UPF has partnered with the South Korea-based Hyojeong Academic Foundation, creator and publisher of the “Character Counts! A Life of Hyojeong” curriculum. This curriculum is based on three fundamental goals of life and education: 1) becoming a person of mature character; 2) establishing loving relationships and family; and 3) making a contribution to society.

## Pilot Program Launched

From September to November 2023, meetings were held with several stakeholders in secondary education in Samoa (directors of education, principals, deputy principals) to identify desired aims of a character education program for Samoan high school students. They included:

- Promote peace of mind (mental health)
- Counter violence (domestic violence, school - based violence)
- Present role models of integrity, courage

Two faith-based high schools agreed to run a pilot of the Hyojeong Character Education curriculum for their Year 9 (age 13) classes during 2024. In one case, the principal was so inspired by the teaching resources that she decided to run the lessons herself.

A standout feature of the Hyojeong Character Education curriculum is that it goes beyond promoting humanistic values and guides



Year 9 students who won first place in a team role play competition about “Honesty is the Best Policy.”



The virtues presented in the Hyojeong Character Education program align with the school’s motto: Honesty, Respect, Love.



learners to connect to the creator, God, through their conscience.

Students learn that they can develop peace of mind and a sense of dignity by making a habit of responding to the guidance of their conscience, which acts like an inner parent or trusted teacher.

Surveys of students who participated in the classes showed very positive responses, with one Year 9 boy commenting, “I just want to (say) that this character (course) is the way of developing people’s character in life, and it is the way for me to change, that is why I love this subject.” Most students indicated that they had shared about the content of the character lessons with their family members.

### **New Relationship Paradigm**

The word “hyojeong,” which appears in the title of this program and throughout the lessons, is a Korean term, and represents a novel approach to cultivating relationship intelligence. Hyojeong is explained as having a sense of duty toward parents (hyo) together with a heart of love (jeong) toward them. As young people grow and develop hyojeong as a character trait, they will come to willingly serve their parents and grandparents, even helping them before being asked. This results in mutual respect and love between parents and children where each feels valued. It is posited that hyojeong can be a useful

new paradigm for workplace relations in which young people have traditionally been in a position to learn from elders. With 21st century knowledge and skills, such as in information technology and business, young people are now in a position to contribute to the workplace alongside their elders. If they have developed hyojeong toward their parents, they can naturally apply this character trait in their work environment and interact more freely with their elders than in past generations.

Discussions with a director of education of mission schools in Samoa have revealed that hyojeong could be relevant to the following situations in Samoan society:

- Helping youth who find it hard to comply with the cultural norm of not “answering back” to their parents and who struggle with anger management or suicidal thoughts.
- Developing mutual love and respect between parents and children, and increasing literacy in terms of respectful language.
- Helping parents who are struggling to conform with cultural expectations, particularly with financial pressures. It could help them to discuss the positives and negatives of the Samoan culture and find solutions.
- Helping with discipline issues in the classroom, and improving student performance in other subjects.

This augurs well for future expansion of the Hyojeong Character Education program in Samoa and other Oceania nations.

– Dr. Jacinta Moreau is education coordinator for UPF-Samoa

# Character Education Addresses Behavior Issues in Nigerian Schools

*By George Ogurie*

UPF has embarked on a program to train teachers in peace and character education (PCE) for implementation in Nigerian schools. The goal is to train a total of 4,560 teachers nationwide – an average of 120 in each of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, and another 120 that will serve as state coordinators.

Teachers who attend this training learn the meaning of character education and come to appreciate its importance for the development of young people's relationships in their families, in their workplaces, and their communities. Character education helps young people avoid careless and destructive behavior, violence, substance abuse, promiscuity, crime, etc. It builds them up to be people of good character, responsible citizens of the nation, and promising future leaders.

In 2021, UPF established a national working committee to promote character education nationwide. A critical step in taking character education nationwide in Nigeria was the customization of the UPF materials. To date, a Content Development and Review Sub-

Committee has completed the primary-level material.

With the customized content, a training workshop was conducted for teachers in twenty pilot schools in August 2023. Teachers were first trained in PCE concepts, pedagogy, and action-planning skills. The trained teachers moved on to implement PCE in the pilot schools using the Teachers Manual and Learners Workbook at the start of the 2023-2024 academic year. Additional activities included project meetings, the formation of PCE clubs, and identifying character issues among teachers and students, as well as designing and implementing intervention measures to deal with character issues.

A research team, put together to assess PCE implementation and its impact, identified three major ways in which PCE is important:

- For developing moral values
- For promoting love and peace in families, the community and society
- For shaping teachers' and learners' characters



*PCE Class at LEA Primary School, Kabusa*

They said PCE had helped to identify and address character issues such as:

- Teachers' dress code
- Fighting and bullying among pupils
- Lateness, absenteeism and truancy
- Sex among pupils
- Drug abuse
- Child abuse by parents and guardians
- Teachers' aggressiveness toward pupils

The level of interest was very high among pupils, who responded with enthusiasm to questions on peace and character education.

Overall, all stakeholders in pilot schools had a very positive attitude, concluding that the PCE curriculum would help advance a more peaceful and progressive society in Nigeria. It was recommended that PCE be implemented at all levels of education, either as a stand-alone course or integrated into various courses.

- George Ogurie is sub-regional director for UPF-West Africa.



Three Days Preparatory Workshop with Stakeholders



PCE Class at LEA Primary School, Giri



Model Primary School, Asokoro

# UN Day of Peace Celebrations around the World

## Moldova



Members of the Cyclists Club in Chisinau city join UPF-Moldova in dedicating their city championship as a Peace Road event on the International Day of Peace, on Sept. 21.

## Ghana



A 9-year-old boy releases a single dove representing peace at the University of Ghana in Accra on Sept. 21, as UPF-Ghana and partners launch a "One Million Signatures for Peace" campaign.

## India



New members of the University Peace Club of ICFAI-University in Gangtok, Sikkim, India take a group photo during a UPF-India program on Sept. 20.

## Argentina



Organized by UPF-Argentina, an interfaith group shares prayers and messages for peace in the Peace Auditorium at Basilian Scientific School in Buenos Aires on Sept. 25.

## Thailand



Over 1800 teachers and students attend an event to mark the International Day of Peace at the Eastern College of Technology in Chonburi, Thailand, on Sept. 20, initiated by UPF-Thailand.

## Canada



Cyclists and marchers pose in front of the Peace Monument at Parc Beaudet in Montreal on Sept. 21, during a Peace Road event held by UPF-Quebec.

## Zambia

UPF-Zambia and partner organizations visit Matero After Care home for the elderly in Lusaka on Sept. 20, to donate food and other essentials to center residents.



## Ireland



Interfaith representatives pray at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens in Dublin on Sept. 22, followed by a celebration of peace arranged by UPF-Ireland at the Unity House Peace Embassy.



## Australia



Speakers and audience pose for a photo following an interactive seminar on "Cultivating a Culture of Peace" in Melbourne, hosted by UPF-Australia and partner organizations on Sept. 21.

## United Kingdom



Ambassadors for peace, peace advocates and community leaders join to celebrate the International Day of Peace at UPF-United Kingdom's headquarters in London on Sept. 24.



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