



The Launching of IAPP in Denmark for the Nordic Countries

Copenhagen, Denmark, September 23, 2017

By David Hanna

On Saturday 23rd September, twenty current and former members of parliament, youth political leaders and UPF representatives from the Nordic countries met in the Danish Parliament building in Copenhagen to launch the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace.

It took the form of a one-day, round-table conference - which represented well the characteristic sense of equality that is enjoyed in Nordic countries in general, and Denmark in particular. Member of Parliament, Ulla Sandbaek was chairperson for the meeting which, as it brought together participants from Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, was conducted in the English language.

The morning session began with three presentations that focused largely on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their contribution to peace in the world and the betterment of a society where there is 'no one left behind'. Dr. Steen Hildebrandt, professor at Aarhus University, who is an expert and published author on this topic, presented his findings in a scholarly and heartfelt way

that set the tone for some excellent sharing. As we sat around a circle of tables, a person's turn to speak was acknowledged by having the previous speaker throw them a soft ball with bells on it. Democracy in action! Peace Ambassador Marion Pederson, a former member of the Danish Parliament spoke, as did Sonja Mandt, a member of the Norwegian parliament. It was particularly good to have some youth representatives of Danish political parties actively present.

After lunch, two short films were shown that introduced the laureates of the 2017 Sunhak Peace Prize. Their work was upheld as examples of what just one person can do - and that the UPF and IAPP goal of world peace should not be thought of as too idealistic.

Before the final afternoon session, participants were treated to a private guided tour of the Danish Parliament building with interesting stories and insights into the Danish style of government. We closed with the signing of the Inaugural Resolution. When read out, the wording conveyed a powerful vision of a call to work together across party and national boundaries to realize our deep human aspirations for a peaceful world.

