

A New Vision for Peace & Human Development

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Madame President of The General Conference, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests Ambassadors for Peace, Ladies and Gentlemen! It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you all here today on behalf of The Universal Peace Federation, a principle host and organiser of this European Leadership Conference being held here at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris and focussed on this profound and vital theme of a *"A New Vision for Peace & Human Development"*

As many of you will know, Universal Peace Federation (which I shall refer to it from now on as "UPF" for short) Women's Federation for World Peace and a number of their affiliated organisations, have worked closely in support of U.N. activities and programmes around the world for many years and indeed are established as NGOs in consultative status with one or other of The U.N.'s constituent bodies. We very much respect and support The work of The United Nations as a whole and are inspired by its founding ideals. Reading them it is difficult for one's heart not to be moved and one's spirit uplifted. In particular I refer to the vision that they evoke of a single human family, the members of which are committed to live and strive wholeheartedly for the sake of each other's welfare and benefit.

I believe that one of the key roles of The U.N.'s civil society partners such as UPF and its fellow NGOs represented here today, is to help keep alive that founding spirit and revive it when it fails to be invoked as it should be. In short, that is a prime reason why I think that the numerous civil society initiatives that work with the U.N. the world over are valuable and of course all the NGOs represented here today are contributing in that way too. It is moving to see this sense of partnership between U.N. bodies and NGOs developing and to see so many such organisations represented here today. It gives reason for hope because it is now clearer than ever that The U.N. and member governments will never be able to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals (or indeed many other of their aspirations) on their own and will need the wholehearted help and cooperation of the N.G.O. sector. I believe that gatherings such as this can be highly effective in forging the sense of solidarity and common purpose between U.N. bodies and civil society that is essential for that purpose and I sincerely hope that this conference bear fruit in that way.

I think it is fair to say that of all the different constituent organisations of the U.N. UPF perhaps feels the greatest natural affinity with U.N.E.S.C.O. I think there are two main reasons for this.



Panel participants: HE Dr Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan (President of the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO), Katherin Plane, Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan (First Minister of Wales 2000 - 2009), Admiral Jean Dafourcq (Director of Studies of the Ecole Militaire in Paris, Editor of the Journal Defense), Dr Yong Cheon Song (UPF European Chairman), Mrs Hai Ok Lee Song (European WFWP Advisor), Ambassador Dr Walther Lichem (Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs), Laurent Ladouce (Director Centre for Culture and Peace, Author Project Pakxe)

The first is that UNESCO's agenda and UPF 's agenda share so many common areas of concern and interest. UNESCO's core areas of activity - education, science and culture - are all such a large part of what UPF and its affiliates are focussed on and of course there are other areas such as Human Rights in which both are very concerned and active.

The second is that both organisations see their areas of special concern not as ends in themselves, but as instruments through which the lasting world peace that we all long for will be realised. UNESCO is to be congratulated on the key role that it has played in so strongly promoting what has come to be known as "The Culture of Peace" which is based on the profound insight that it has been proclaiming for many decades that true peace can only begin "in the hearts of men". This simple but truly profound insight is one which UPF deeply and whole-heartedly shares.

So, for those reasons you can see that it would be hard for us not to feel a special affinity with UNESCO.

UPF's Founders, Dr Sun Myung Moon and Dr Hak Ja Han Moon have founded many first rate institutions around the world that provide excellent education for the general population, including several universities and colleges, numerous schools for children of all age groups, not to mention educational programmes that, having been embraced by government, have delivered much needed education to young people in the public school systems in such diverse nations as Russia, Benin in Africa and St Kitts and Nevis in The West Indies on key topics such as human rights and character development. Through such initiatives as The 'World University Alliance' they plan to establish schemes whereby it will become not only possible but increasingly normal for young people on every continent to gain direct exposure to life in other nations, cultures, religions and racial and ethnic groupings during their degree courses, by taking each year of their degree course at a different institution and in a different part of the world.

In the scientific field The International Conference on The Unity of The Sciences has brought together many of the world's most eminent scientists and scholars - from the "hard sciences" as well as from the humanities to develop an increased awareness of the need for a trans-disciplinary and integrated approach to knowledge and problem solving, have promoted extensive environmental research including especially research into the potential of the oceans and of fishing and into "wetlands development". They have also promoted ground breaking research in the field of electronics and communications through, among other bodies, "WRIST" - The World Research Institute into Science and Technology in The United States. Again the spirit of all these initiatives is to foster world peace through cooperation across boundaries of nationality, race, religion and culture and with the heart to share all breakthroughs freely with the less developed world through technology transfer.

In the realm of culture and the fine arts "The Little Angels" performing arts group, The New York City Symphony Orchestra, The Universal Ballet Company and the Kirov Ballet Academy in Washington are all bodies that have blazed a trail for the fine arts around the world. They have done so very consciously with the intention of building bridges between cultures, races and nations and all as part of an even greater vision of establishing lasting world peace. I was very proud when in 2010 the Little Angels were able to perform right here in this building to UNESCO delegations and staff and were able to deeply touch and move the hearts of everyone, including Dr Davidson Hepburn the most recent past President of the General Conference.

For UPF expanding and developing understanding and awareness of how we can all contribute to lasting world peace could be described as our core mission. Later in the programme you will have the chance to understand more deeply about the principles that we see as critical to peace and development in all areas. But if there is one cardinal and overriding principle that more than any other expresses how lasting peace and development can be realised it is, I believe, the motto "Living for the sake of others".

Since this is the most fundamental precept on which we believe all human development, any universally shared set of values or philosophy or culture of peace can be based, I propose to go into it in a little depth to try to show just how fundamental and universal a principle it is. You could say that it is the father or mother of all principles and yet it is so little understood and seemingly increasingly less practised in many societies with very harmful consequences.

Whether we look at the text books provided by the world's religions or those produced by science or contemplate the amazing text book that is Mother Nature or merely dig into the text book that is our own experience of life, we can see that nothing is created just for itself but rather is designed to serve a purpose higher than itself and to live for the sake of other beings. I believe that this is indeed a profound and immutable truth that holds the key to all development and expansion of life and that it is one which we ignore at our peril.

