

UPF's interfaith initiative, the IAPD, was inaugurated in Toronto, Canada

Robert Duffy
February 3, 2019



Toronto, Canada -- UPF's interfaith initiative, the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), was inaugurated in Canada on February 3, during UN World Interfaith Harmony Week 2019. More than 200 people attended the event, which took place at the Sala Caboto ballroom in Toronto.

The program opened with an indigenous welcome and invocation by Mrs. Judith Matheson, which were followed by welcome remarks from UPF-Canada Chairman Mr. Moonshik Kim. Congratulatory remarks were given by Canadian Member of Parliament Hon. Marco Mendicino. Afterwards, a short video about the life and work of UPF Founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon was shown.



UPF-Canada Secretary-General Mr. Robert Duffy introduced the IAPD as a new effort, based on the interfaith work Rev. and Mrs. Moon carried out over many years, to take the interfaith community to the next level. A significant example of interfaith brotherhood, he said, was the intra-Muslim conference sponsored by Rev. Moon that took place after 9/11 in Jakarta, Indonesia. This conference allowed the Muslim community worldwide to gather, reflect on and respond to the activities of extremists within their community.

A panel of religious leaders representing six faith communities -- Sikh, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist, moderated by Mr. Franco Famularo, president of UPF-Canada -- were asked to respond to the question: "What do you think would be the next step to take as interfaith leaders to bring interfaith work in Canada to the next level?"

After presentations by the faith leaders, a water bowl was placed on a table. The faith leaders were each asked to take a glass of water and pour it into the bowl, symbolizing the confluence of efforts of different faith communities for interfaith peace and cooperation.



The invocation for dinner was given by Father Terry Gallagher, an interfaith leader in Toronto who helped inspire the Golden Rule Poster. Dinner followed with musical performances.

Youth were well represented at the event, especially during the entertainment portion of the program. Young Sri Lankans and youth volunteers from Japan performed dances. A young Filipino woman sang jazz and opera; a young professional violinist entertained; and a group of Unificationist youth, some of whom came from Montreal, sang a song.

UPF-Canada collected feedback from the participants, and the comments were generally quite positive and constructive.

