

Lusaka, Zambia: East African leaders at International Leadership Conference

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Lusaka, Zambia -- East African parliamentarians and religious leaders and Zambian traditional leaders attended an International Leadership Conference at which an international parliamentarians' organization was launched.

Uganda's minister for ethics and integrity, Uganda's minister of energy and mineral development, and Lesotho's minister of tourism, environment and culture joined 72 parliamentarians from 15 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa, including Zambia. More than 70 Zambian traditional leaders, 33 religious leaders and 17 media houses were present at the regional ILC.

The conference was held at the InterContinental Lusaka hotel from November 5 to 7, 2016, under the theme "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations."

Day One

On November 5, the first day of the conference, a UPF delegation traveled 50 kilometers (more than 31 miles) north of Lusaka, the capital, to meet 50 female Zambian parliamentarians. UPF-Africa Regional Chair Rev. Kathy Rigney and UPF-Africa East Regional Chair Rev. Bakary Camara traveled to the small town of Chisamba to meet the parliamentarians, who could not attend the ILC as they had their own conference on the same weekend. The UPF delegation spoke about UPF as well as the newly formed International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) and left printed materials.

That evening there were 288 attendees at the Welcoming Banquet. Zambian Vice President Inonge Mutukwa Wina presided over the event together with former Zambian President Rupiah Banda.

UPF-Africa Regional Secretary General Adama Doumbia, acting as the master of ceremonies, introduced the head table and, in particular, Mr. Lume Kaunda, a grandson of the founding president of Zambia, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. Mr. Kaunda delivered a message of greeting on behalf of his grandfather.

The former president, in his message, spoke of his longtime association with UPF founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the poem he wrote for them and his admiration for the vision and ideals of UPF.

An introductory video to UPF was shown before Rev. Bakary Camara, the UPF-Africa East regional chair, led a toast. Rev. Kathy Rigney, the UPF-Africa regional chair, gave the welcoming remarks.



Day Two

November 6 started with the Opening Plenary Session. Once again, the ballroom at the InterContinental Lusaka hotel was full. Although 250 places had been set up, 311 people filled the room.

After the invocation given by Bishop Peter Ndhlovu, founder of the Bible Gospel Church in Africa, Dr. Thomas Walsh, the president of UPF International, gave the Welcoming Remarks. Dr. Walsh introduced UPF and its activities since February 2016 and described how the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) is being inaugurated in each region. "I am delighted to be here in Zambia, your beautiful country," he said, "and looking forward to see the IAPP working together with UPF to sustain peace in this region and Zambia in particular."

A video introducing the founders, "Realizing the Dream of One Human Family," which was produced by MBCNET of Korea after the February 2016 ILC, was shown. Rev. Father Simon Lokodo, the Ugandan minister of ethics and integrity, was so inspired by this video, he requested a copy.

Hon. Professor Geoffrey Lungwangwa, a Zambian member of Parliament, introduced the guest of honor, Mrs. Evelyn Manda. Professor Lungwangwa recalled his association with the UPF founders since becoming a member of the Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA), an affiliated organization, in the 1980s.

Mrs. Manda, the CEO of Pillars of Peace, delivered a message on behalf of Zambian Vice President Inonge Mutukwa Wina. The vice president in her message said: "I wish ... to applaud the Universal Peace Federation for the role they are playing in promoting peace through various peace initiatives. ... We are happy about the concept of the Universal Peace Federation of 'One Family under God.' We sincerely believe that family is the building block of a nation and it is a very important component towards the development of our continent. Conversely, one of the critical challenges we face today is the crucial breakdown of the family unit, resulting in a wide range of social problems."

The vice president called the inauguration of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace "a very important initiative." She expressed her hope that IAPP will achieve its objectives and that "we shall all endeavor to apply the resolutions of this conference in our respective leadership roles. With these remarks I wish to declare this leadership conference officially opened."

The first session dealt with the problem of extremism and how to overcome it. The moderator was Mr. Robert Williamson, special envoy to UPF-South Africa, while the panelists were Hon. Simon Lokodo, the Ugandan minister of ethics and integrity; Mrs. Judith Annie Mwila, president/founder of the NGO Families Are Nations; Hon. Debbie Dineo Raphuti, a member of Parliament from South Africa; and Hon. Speciose Ayinkamiye, a former senator from Rwanda.

Mrs. Mwila said: "Strongly knitted, loving and caring family units are key to ending violence and other various forms of abuse. The family by nature is united from inception, while dealing with any signs of divisions and hatred in the family establishment is the first step to eradicating potential hatred leading to violence and extremism in the whole wide world."

These representatives of government, civil society and faith-based organizations addressed the growing problem of extremism and offered recommendations for overcoming this problem. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16) propose to build and strengthen peaceful, inclusive and just communities, societies and nations. One of the great threats to achieving SDG16 is extremism. In this session, speakers considered the ways forward to achieve SDG16 and to address the root causes of extremism in our contemporary world.



In **the second session**, moderated by Mr. Rudolf Faerber, secretary general of UPF-Zambia, the panelists long associated with the life and work of the UPF founders spoke about the teachings and principles that guide the worldwide movement, as well as the many programs and initiatives they developed in order to build a world of lasting peace. The panelists were, Mr. Adama Doumbia, Rev. Bakary Camara, Mr. Damas Marcel Muyango Museminari, and Mr. Robert Williamson.

They recounted the founders' contributions to peace in Africa through character education and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns that saved many African lives, the building of schools in different countries, sponsorship of tuitions in different higher institutions of learning in the United States and Korea, foster care programs for orphans, agricultural as well as environmental projects. Here, emphasis was put on deforestation that is contributing considerably to the drought faced by many African countries. The Sunhak Peace Prize video showing the first laureates who tackled environmental issues was shown.

A chief said: "I have a problem. My people need charcoal in order to cook and keep themselves warm or earn some income. I can't prevent them from cutting trees, although I know it is detrimental to the environment." Another mentioned the depletion of the fish population due to the reduction of the size of the holes in nets. The interactions were very cordial as they tried to find solutions to their problems.

The third session, on Human Rights and Good Governance, was moderated by Mr. Lawrence Banda, vice secretary general of UPF-Zambia. The panelists were Prophet Dr. S.B. Radebe, founder of the Revelation Church of God and chair of UPF-South Africa; Bishop David Masupa, founder and president of the Independent Churches of Zambia; Hon. Titus Siphon Thwala, member of Parliament from Swaziland; and Rev. Jean Augustin Ghomsi, acting secretary general of UPF-Africa East.

Prophet Dr. Radebe spoke of his experience of good governance with his church and how he feels this could be an example for governments to follow. For Bishop Masupa, human rights and good governance go together, and he said there is a need for cooperation between political and religious leaders.

Hon. Thwala criticized "Quiet Diplomacy" as being indifferent to the plague of the victim. He quoted Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

Rev. Ghomsi spoke of the need for character to be considered in choosing or electing officials. "A leader who lies to and cheats on his spouse will surely lie to his people and be corrupt," he said. Morality and spiritual principles should be the foundation for leadership. Good governance starts on the individual level. He ended with a quote from UPF founder Dr. Sun Myung Moon: "Before trying to govern the universe, you must first govern yourself. If you don't, your body is the enemy of the universe."

The question-and-answer session that followed was quite heated, as religious leaders and political leaders were identified as culprits by the traditional leaders. These traditional leaders said they were disappointed by the attitudes of political leaders, who, they said, came for votes making empty promises and not caring enough for the people who had to vote for them. The religious leaders were seen often as cowards who were afraid to stand up for what is right and the right of the people by speaking truth to power.

The participation of the traditional leaders from Zambia was exemplary and very astonishing. They were always on time and very engaged during the question-and-answer sessions.



Day Three

On November 7, the third and final day of the conference, the program started with a Peace Road event. From the National Assembly to the Civic Center, 40 cyclists, the military band as well as all the ILC participants took part in the Peace Road. Mr. Adama Doumbia explained the meaning of the Peace Road and why it was a way to promote the International Highway Project, connecting the world from the Cape of Good Hope in Cape Town, South Africa, to Santiago, Chile, through the Bering Strait, a project so dear to the founders.

In the afternoon, the National Assembly hall was the setting for the inauguration of the IAPP, with Mr. Robert Williamson as master of ceremonies. The program began with an invocation from Bishop Masupa. Then the MC called on Hon. Victoria Kalima, the Zambian minister of gender, to give the Opening Remarks.

"On behalf of Hon. Chishimba Kambwili, minister of information and broadcasting services and IAPP interim chair," she said, "I would like to welcome all of you in the Parliament Building of Zambia. To all our distinguished guests from abroad, we are really honored by your presence at this solemn occasion. Welcome to all your Royal Highnesses. A special thanks to all the UPF officials who have made this possible! The International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace is a brilliant idea. We will all work together to make this idea come true." She recognized the important role of IAPP in building and

maintaining peace in Zambia. On behalf of the chair of IAPP, Hon. Dr. Kambwili, she urged the parliamentarians to join the IAPP.

Dr. Thomas Walsh was then called to the podium to give his welcoming remarks. He said he was pleased to announce that the co-founder of UPF and IAPP, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, had proposed to provide a special grant of \$500,000 for sustainable development programs in East Africa, centering on the Universal Peace Federation and the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace.

"The funds are to be used to address the root causes of, and provide humanitarian relief from, the critical challenges being faced in this region, including problems of environmental degradation, deforestation, desertification, scarcity of water, threats to food security and human wellness, lack of sanitation, as well as problems associated with corruption, family breakdown, and poverty," Dr. Walsh said.

This was welcomed with gratitude, enthusiasm and expectation by all the participants. Dr. Moon's gift could not be timelier. Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Kenya, and other nations are all suffering from climate change and drought.

Dr. Walsh introduced Mr. Kwon Jin Moon, one of the founders' sons, who read the Founder's Keynote Address of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. In her message, the UPF founder stressed that good governance is not secured only by the policies and laws of the political system. To secure good governance, it is also necessary that those who hold positions of power be people of good character, guided by their conscience and universal moral principles. Good governance also depends upon a well-educated and morally responsible citizenry.

"It is for this reason, throughout history, religion has been an important factor in contributing to the moral and spiritual development of both the political leaders and the citizens. It is imperative that, within modern democratic systems, we do not lose sight of God, our Creator and Heavenly Parent, nor of the spiritual principles and laws that have been taught throughout the ages," Dr. Moon stated in her message.

At the end of the speech the Zambian minister of gender joined most of the guests in a standing ovation. She later was delighted to join the other VIPs in signing the declaration for the launching of the IAPP.

At the Closing Ceremony at Lilayi Lodge, located in the middle of an animal reserve, 58 chiefs as well as two ministers from Uganda and Lesotho and six members of Parliament were appointed Ambassadors for Peace by Dr. Thomas Walsh, president of UPF International.

It was a new beginning for Zambia and East Africa. A special thanks to all UPF officials who supported the local organizers in many ways. Thanks to the New Hope Singers of Zambia, who led the participants throughout the three days in singing the National Anthem of Zambia, the Peace Anthem and other songs.

This Regional ILC for East Africa came on the foundation of ILCs for Asia (Nepal, July 28 to 31), West Africa (Burkina Faso, August 8 to 10), Europe and Middle East (London, September 7 to 9), Central America (Costa Rica, October 6 to 8) and South America (Paraguay, October 10 to 12).

The represented nations in the region are: Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Media Coverage

These events were featured on Zambian TV and radio stations before, during and after the conference, sensitizing people to the need for peace. The general attitude by the media toward ILC, IAPP, and the Peace Road was friendly. The attendance of 29 journalists from the media of TV, radio and print attests to this relationship that was created. Many have expressed their desire to become Ambassadors for Peace. Altogether four TV stations, nine radio stations, four print newspapers, and two Web sites covered the events.

Some Reflections

Hon. Cecilia Chazama, Malawi: "I would like to thank you most sincerely for the invitation and all logistic arrangements made to me so that I attended the International Leadership Conference in Lusaka. I don't take it for granted, a lot of lessons were learnt, I met people I never expected to meet -- like His Grace, Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, among others. I hope Malawi will be the next destination to be launched."

Hon. Simon Lokodo (Rev. Father), minister of ethics and integrity, Uganda: "I am happy I came. I would make sure my government partners with UPF in order to build programs for peace in Uganda. I am so impressed by the work of UPF to bring about world peace, especially the idea of peace through ideal families."