

IAPD was inaugurated in New Zealand at Mt. Eden War Memorial Hall, Auckland

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Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) was inaugurated in New Zealand on the 13th of April 2019. About 70 participants from all walks of life came to the precious, monumental event held in the Chamber Room of Mt. Eden War Memorial Hall, Auckland. The memory of the recent Christchurch tragedy was still fresh in everyone's minds, bringing guests and leaders of different faiths together.

The event was hosted by Mr. Geoffrey Fyers, UPF-NZ Secretary-General. It was opened with Kaumatua (Maori welcoming) by Pastor Bill Tangariki, longtime Ambassador For Peace and followed by a minute of silence for victims and their families in Christchurch.

A video presentation to introduce UPF was then shown, followed by keynote address given by Mr. Adel Jamati, UPF-NZ Director, who gave a powerful speech titled "Faith and World Peace." It inspired everyone present and set the tone for the subsequent panels of discussions.



The first panel discussion was based on the topic: "A Vibrant Community for Family, Peace, and Human Development." The speakers were:

AFP/Mr. Gul Zaman; representing Islam,

AFP/Mr. Ram Dharma Nand (JP), Ambassador for Sanatan; representing Hinduism,

David Rankin, Ngāpuhi Leader; representing Maori Spirituality, and

Elder Suamalie NT Iosefa Naisali, United Reformed Christian Church Tuvalu, Kiribati in NZ; representing Christianity.

In particular, Rev. Elder Suamalie NT Iosefa Naisali gave a short presentation based on his experience in 2017's interfaith gathering in Korea after being invited by Mother Moon.

The second panel discussion was based on the topic: "Religious and Political Leaders: Exploring Ways to Cooperate for Lasting Peace." The speakers were:

Anne Degia-Pala (QSM), Founder of EthNix Links Networks;

Daud Azimullah, Executive Member of Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ);

Ross Robertson, Former Labour Party MP; and

Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi, National Party MP.

After each panel discussion, meaningful questions and answers were exchanged by the speakers and the audience. Dr. Muhammad Sahu Khan, longtime AFP, stood up to applaud about the importance of UPF and IAPD after the second panel discussion.

To officially inaugurate IAPD, there was Peace Water Ceremony and the signing of the IAPD Resolution. A congratulatory song, "Where Peace Begins" was then sung by Mr. Andrew Halim and Mrs. Tomoyo Moriwaki who just participated in an international marriage blessing ceremony together in September last year, held by Mother Moon in Korea.

The event was closed in prayer by Mrs. Ruth Cleaver, Auckland Interfaith Council President.

Peace can never be understated and interfaith harmony is even more integral now than ever. In the aftermath of the Christchurch tragedy, it was inspiring to see faith-based communities banding together to promote lasting peace and harmony, centering on universal principles that UPF has been advocating since its founding. We sincerely hope that the success of this event will lead to a better future for everyone.

