

## IAPP Myanmar launched - The Role of Governments and Faith-Based Orgs.

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Naypyidaw, Myanmar—The Myanmar chapter of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) was launched on July 3, 2017, at the Hilton Hotel in Naypyidaw, the country’s capital. The theme of the event was “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations.”

H.E. Madhav Kumar Nepal, former prime minister of Nepal (2009 – 2011), and Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, two-time minister of the government of Nepal, delivered special addresses at the launching and graced the occasion, together with three members of parliament from Thailand.



Among the 126 guests who attended the event were 99 Myanmar parliamentarians from both the House of Nationality (upper house) and the House of Representatives (lower house); the ambassador of Nepal to Myanmar; four religious leaders; NGO leaders; representatives from the media; and Ambassadors for Peace.

The launching of the IAPP-Myanmar was supported officially by the speaker of the House of Nationality, Hon. Mahn Win Khine Thann, who sent 70 members of parliament from the upper house, and by the speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. U Win Myint, who sent 29 members of parliament from the lower house.



In addition, both Speakers accepted courtesy calls from the UPF delegation, led by former prime minister Nepal; Hon. Dhakal; a member of Nepal's Legislature Parliament; Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, president of UPF International; Dr. Chung-sik Yong, chair of UPF-Asia; and other leaders of UPF-Asia.

Both Speakers also sent Hon. U Khun Maung Thaung, president of the Ethnical Peace Committee; Hon. U Saw, president of the Citizenship Committee; Hon. U Khin Maung Win, president of the Judiciary and Law Committee; and Hon. U Tun Tun Hein, president of the Law Committee, to participate in the IAPP launching on their behalf.

Prior to the launching, in the morning of that day, the state counsellor and minister of foreign affairs of Myanmar, H.E. Aung San Suu Kyi, received a courtesy call from the UPF delegation, which included former prime minister Nepal; Hon. Dhakal; Dr. Walsh; Dr. Yong; and Dr. Robert Kittel, president of Youth and Students for Peace, and other leaders of UPF-Asia. Being officially received by Her Excellency was the strongest acknowledgement of the government's support for the launching of the IAPP.

The official launching, in the afternoon, began with an interfaith peace harmony ceremony. Representatives of the four major religions—Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism—offered their blessings of prayer for peace in Myanmar and poured water into a common vessel, symbolizing the unity of religions.

Welcoming remarks were given by UPF-Myanmar chair, Swe Zin Taik. The opening speech was delivered by Dr. Walsh. This was followed by special remarks from Dr. Yong, former prime minister Nepal, Hon. Dhakal and Dr. Kittel.

Representing members of parliament from both houses, Hon. Shi Lar Nan Town gave the congratulatory remarks, acknowledging the parliamentarian's support for the launching of the IAPP in Myanmar. Myanmar's parliamentarians confirmed their support by signing the IAPP Resolution.

At the end of inaugural session, Mr. Myo Win, vice chair of IAPP-Myanmar, gave the vote of thanks. Mr. Jakari Iamsam-ang, assistant secretary general of UPF-Thailand, served as the emcee of the event.

Following the inaugural session was a dinner banquet and cultural performance.