

Vanuatu IAPP's official inauguration at the Warwick Le Lagoon Hotel in Port Vila

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The Vanuatu Chapter of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) had its official inauguration at the Warwick Le Lagoon Hotel in Port Vila city, the country's capital

There were about 40 participants, including the Speaker of Parliament, one State Minister, five Members of the Parliament, and one former head of State, as well as religious and community leaders, youth and women leaders, government and media officials attended the program, which took place on the evening of November 20, 2017.

The inaugural conference began at 6 pm with Mr. Peter Onis, UPF Vanuatu Acting Secretary General, served as the Master of Ceremony. There was a wonderful opening prayer from Pastor Pakoa Maraki, a former Secretary General of Vanuatu Christian Council and an effective Ambassador for Peace, followed by a welcoming address from Abraham Nasak, UPF Vanuatu Vice Chairman and Director of National Disaster Management Office.

In his inaugural address, Hon. Alfred Moa, Minister of Internal Affairs upheld the goal and vision of IAPP which is to contribute to world peace, and to rise above political parties and focus more on moral issues such as the promotion of strong family values, character based leadership, conflict resolution and peace development. He then wishes every success of UPF and IAPP in Vanuatu.

Rev. Shang Seon Park, Oceania UPF Regional Chairman gave a congratulatory address. He stressed the role and significance of IAPP and congratulated the IAPP inauguration in Vanuatu, and offered best wishes for IAPP activities in Vanuatu.

Rev. Gregory Stone, the Oceania UPF Regional Secretary General, gave a presentation on the introduction to UPF and IAPP with its worldwide network of parliamentarians, followed by a presentation on Family Values and World Peace.



After the dinner break there was a panel discussion chaired by Hon. Andrew Solomon Napuat, an effective Member of Parliament and Parliament Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Other panelists were Hon. Silas Bule, a Member of Parliament and Parliament Secretary to the Ministry of Education; Hon. Gracia Shadrack, a Member of Parliament and Parliament Secretary to the Ministry of Health; Hon. Jacob Matanegwele, Member of Parliament for Ambae constituency; Hon. Uri Warawara, Member of Parliament for Malo/Aore constituency; Pastor Pakoa Maraki, a former Secretary General of Vanuatu Christian Council, representing religious leaders; Paramount Chief John Tari Lama, President of Port Vila Council of Chiefs, representing the traditional leaders; and Mrs. Leas Cullwick, Chief Executive Officer of National Council of Women, representing women leaders.

The panel discussion was vibrant and inspiring, with most of the participants upholding Christian and traditional values and stressed the importance of strong family values and righteous, moral leaderships in the society and on the national level. This was followed by a question-and-answer session, in which the audience also offered comments.

Then there was an Official Address and Speech given by the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Esmon Saimon, who then officially launched the IAPP in Vanuatu.

After the official launching of the IAPP by the Speaker of Parliament, there was the Ambassador for Peace Awards presentation. With due respect, the Ambassador for Peace Award was also presented to the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Esmon Saimon, including the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Alfred Moa, and other five Members of the Parliament. A total of ten Ambassadors for Peace Awards were presented to the VIPs that evening.

Finally, the resolution for the formation of IAPP-Vanuatu was read and signed by all, and the program concluded with a group photo.

With the successful launch of the IAPP, all is now set ready for program development of nationwide mobilization of parliamentarians and build their capacity to work together for peace and to connect them to information, to each other and to resources for peacebuilding.



Note: There were 52 Members of Parliament in the Vanuatu Parliament. At the time of the IAPP launch, there was a Parliament Extraordinary Session commencing.