

## UPF and IAPD Auckland, New Zealand Observes World Interfaith Harmony Week

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Auckland, New Zealand - In observance of UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, UPF and the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) in New Zealand hosted an event on the theme, "Creating Harmony in a World in Crisis," on February 4, 2023 at the Peace Embassy in Auckland. About 25 Ambassadors for Peace and leaders from various faiths attended the program.

A week before, the capital experienced its heaviest rainfall in 170 years of record keeping, resulting in severe flooding that damaged several thousand homes. The organizers considered postponing the program; however, the Ambassadors for Peace's willingness enabled it to be held, and the day it was held turned out to be sunny and hot.





The event opened with a welcome address given by UPF-New Zealand Secretary General Mr. Geoffrey Fyers, who served as the emcee. This was followed by a prayer offered by IAPD-New Zealand Chairman Rev. Suamalie NT Iosefa Naisali. UPF-New Zealand Chairman Mr. Kenji Watanabe introduced the IAPD and encouraged religious leaders to unite so that the common values of religions can function as the conscience of society.



Then, the participants reconfirmed the IAPD Resolution that had been presented at the inauguration of the IAPD-New Zealand in 2019, in the presence of about 70 participants, which was read by former Auckland Inter-Faith Council President Mrs. Ruth Cleaver.

The program continued with representatives of five different faiths offering prayers for world peace and harmony among religions. Afterwards, some introduced their faith, while others gave words of insight to commemorate the week. Rev. Sirr Christoffersen was representing the Sufi faith; Dr. Sheikh Mohammed Amir, the Muslim faith; Mr. Rajender Kumar, the Sikh faith; Mrs. Daisy Lee, the Falun Gong, a Buddhist faith-based organization; Mr. Tej Ram, the Hindu faith; and Tuvaluan ministers, the Christian faith.

The UPF national chapter's schedule for 2023 was announced and it will include a Youth and Family Peace Day event to celebrate marriage and family on November 11.

The atmosphere of the gathering was warm and everyone enjoyed refreshments at the end of the program.