

UPF International: UNESCO in Samarkand: Ethical Dimensions of Progress

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UNESCO's [43rd General Conference](#), held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from October 30 to November 13, 2025, marks an opportunity for global dialogue on education, culture, and ethics in the digital age. Gathering representatives of 195 member states outside Paris for the first time in nearly four decades, the conference underscores the value of intercultural understanding at a time when technology is reshaping societies faster than human consciousness can adapt.

Samarkand, a historic crossroads on the [Silk Roads](#), serves as a fitting venue for exploring the interconnections of knowledge, ethics, and identity in humanity's journey toward the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 ([SDG 4](#)) on quality education and Sustainable Development Goal 16 ([SDG 16](#)) on peace, justice and strong institutions.

The Universal Peace Federation commends this emphasis on the ethical dimensions of progress. Since its founding in 2005, UPF has convened leaders, scholars, and faith communities in addressing the cultural roots of conflict and building frameworks of cooperation beyond religion, ethnicity, and ideology. Founded by [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and [Rev. Sun Myung Moon](#), UPF's vision is rooted in the principle that humanity is one family under God. The organization affirms that education, the family, and cultural exchange are inseparable from peacebuilding, because they nurture empathy and reveal the common spiritual heritage within every civilization.

This core principle, embodied in UPF's initiatives, aligns with UNESCO's constitutional mission to build peace in the minds of men and women. This spirit of cooperation has historical depth: in 2009, UPF hosted a conference at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, affirming shared goals of peace through

education and cultural understanding. Among the distinguished participants was former UN Secretary-General [Boutros Boutros-Ghali](#), whose presence underscored the link between UNESCO's mission and the vision of UPF to build bridges of dialogue and partnership among nations.

This spirit of engagement continued in 2012, when UPF held its [European Leadership Conference](#) at UNESCO HQ under the patronage of the Permanent Delegations of Oman and Kenya. The conference brought together diplomats, scholars, and faith leaders to address themes of human security, the role of the family, and education as foundations for peace, further deepening UPF's ongoing collaboration with UNESCO.

UPF's initiatives, such as those led by the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development ([IAPD](#)) and the International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace ([IAACP](#)), demonstrate that human relationships, rather than automation, form the bedrock of peace. As communities collaborate across cultural and religious divides in service to others, technology serves as a connector rather than a divider. These efforts show how this ethical framework, grounded in discernment, knowledge, and service, can guide advancement toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and safeguard human dignity.

As UNESCO addresses the future of education and cultural heritage, UPF advocates for enhanced focus on ethical and cultural education that integrates intellectual and character development, rooted in family-centered values and intergenerational responsibility. UPF extends an invitation to governments, educational institutions, and UPF [Ambassadors for Peace](#) to partner in initiatives that strengthen ethical standards and intercultural dialogue in the digital landscape. Through dialogue that respects diverse traditions, humanity can forge technologies and institutions aligned with its aspirations.

UPF continues its dedication to partnering with stakeholders across regions to cultivate a world where culture, conscience, and creativity converge in pursuit of enduring peace and mutual prosperity.

**European Leadership Conference supports
UNESCO's work for Peace and Human Development
April 12th – 13th, 2012**



UNESCO's Headquarters in the heart of Paris provided a welcoming venue for the latest in the series of European Leadership Conferences taking place in United Nations Institutions and National Parliaments throughout Europe.



*The former UN Secretary General **Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali** the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) from Jan.*

The generous assistance of the Permanent Delegation of the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Uganda to UNESCO and the patronage of Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, United Nations Secretary General (1992-1996) and current President of the UNESCO Panel on Democracy and Development, enabled the conference to offer support to the important work of UNESCO through this NGO initiative to explore a ***New Vision for Peace and Human Development***.

The Conference was organised by the Universal Peace Federation and the Women's Federation for World Peace in partnership with other Civil Society organisations: the International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Forum of Organisations for International Solidarity on Migration Issues, the Grouping for Action and Initiatives for Africa, the Centre for the Study and Promotion of Culture and Communication in Africa and the Geneva Interreligious and Intercultural Alliance.

Many remarked that the elegant UNESCO conference rooms, packed for two full days with an overflow crowd of over 300, were evidence of the ability of such an initiative to create a dynamic interaction between UNESCO, its delegations and a wider community of concerned NGOs and grass roots activists from more than twenty European countries, including many young people associated with the European Leadership Conference Youth Panel.

A wide variety of speakers representing the concerns of Peace-builders, Civil Society, Women and Youth were mingled with UNESCO Ambassadors, distinguished academics, current and former diplomats and politicians, religious leaders and educators. Below brief summaries of the addresses delivered in the Opening Session provide a flavour of the Conference along with speakers and themes for the seven other sessions. We encourage you to explore in greater depth those topics which are of particular interest to you through the links to speeches, summaries, visual presentations and websites.

OPENING SESSION



H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali's speech, read by his secretary Dr. Sonia Ramzi, reflected on the need for preventive diplomacy, mediation and conciliation by regional organizations as meticulously elaborated in Dr. Boutros Ghali's seminal 1992 work on the *Agenda of Peace*. He also laid emphasis on disarmament and control of the movement of conventional weapons and referred to the need to understand that peace and the development of democracy proceed hand in hand. He concluded on an optimistic note: *I trust the future because I know that men and women of good character are working for peace.* [Link to speech](#)



The President of the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO and Counsellor of the Delegation of Oman **H.E. Dr. Moosa Jaafar Hassan**, opened the session by stating that a new vision requires new strategies which in turn require the involvement of intellectuals, religious leaders, academics and civil society in the support of policymakers. Concluding the session he expressed his hope that UNESCO benefit from the support of the European Leadership Conference '*and the way that you are working for peace*'.



Prof. Akiko Yamanaka, Senior Visiting Scholar at Churchill College, Cambridge and a Former Deputy-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan considered a new definition of human security: '*The nature of security has been evolving since the end of the Cold War from "against" to "with". The concept of security is being broadened considerably and continuously, to incorporate military, political, economic, societal and environmental dimensions, and the inter-linkages between them. The traditional model of security rests upon military defence of national territory - yet for many people in the world much greater threats to security come from internal conflicts, disease, hunger, environmental contamination, street crime, or even domestic violence.*' - [Link to speech](#)



Prof. Ali Rastbeen, President of the Academy of Geopolitics in Paris spoke of the emerging importance of the geopolitics of human security as a new dynamic of contemporary power politics and elaborated on the non-military dimension of current security concerns. - [Link to speech](#)



Dr. Yong Cheon Song, European Chairman of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), expressed his gratitude to UNESCO saying: *Of all the different constituent organisations of the U.N. UPF perhaps feels the greatest natural affinity with UNESCO, whose core areas of activity - education, science and culture - are all such a large part of the focus of UPF and its affiliates.* He went on to emphasize that: *There is one cardinal and overriding principle that more than any other expresses how lasting peace and development can be realised - the motto "Living for the sake of others" is a profound and immutable truth that holds the key to all development and expansion of life and is ignored at our peril.* - [Link to speech](#)



SESSION II: GENDER AND GOOD GOVERNANCE



Mrs. Nelly Cambervelle, Founder and President of IN SOLIDUM - www.in-solidum.com

Theme: *Together - a new approach to sustainable peace* – [Link to speech](#)

Minister Jesus Gary Domingo, Mission of Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva

Theme: *The Family is the Original NGO*

Ms. Sabine Le Blanc – Psychologist and author of *Les relations hommes-femmes mode d'emploi*

Theme: *Restoring gender balance* – [Link to speech](#)

Mrs. Carolyn Handschin-Moser, President WFPW International, Europe www.wfwp.org

Theme: *Beyond gender equity: Strategies for cooperation towards a Culture of Peace* [Link to presentation](#)

SESSION III: AFRICA



Ms. Maguite Lorcy, Founder GAIA (Group for Action and Initiatives in Africa)

Theme: *GAIA's work to support the MDGs in Togo and Ghana* – [Link to speech](#)

Pastor Armand Mavinga, Pres. Centre for the Promotion of Culture and Communication in Africa

Theme: *Culture drives development – justice before peace* – [Link to speech](#)

Mrs. Julie Morgan, Welsh Assembly Member, MP Cardiff Nth (1997-2010)

Theme: *"Life for African Mothers" towards Millenium Development Goal number 5*

H. E. Elizabeth Paula Napeyok, President of the UNESCO African Group, Ambassador Rep. of Uganda to France, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO –

Theme: *Reflection on our value as Africans – character education to restore our dignity*

Ambassador Robert Vandemeulebroucke – former Belgian Ambassador to Nigeria, Benin and Togo

Theme: *Africa at the Turning Point of Peace and Development*

SESSION IV: UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES AND EDUCATING FOR CHARACTER



Venerable Dr. Michel Thao Chan, Founder and President of the Cercle de Reflexion des Nations

Theme: *Awakening Human Consciousness – Declaration of the Duty of Man* – [Link to speech](#)

Dr. Jean-Luc Berlet – Author and Doctor of Philosophy

Theme: *We Need a Strategy for Peace* – [Link to speech](#)

Mr. Khalil Raihani - consultant, member of the Council of Europe pool of Trainers

Theme: *Young People as Equal Actors for Peace*

Mr. Jack Corley, Chair Universal Peace Federation, United Kingdom

Theme: *Educating for Character – the Long Road to Peace* – [Link to presentation](#)

SESSION V: YOUTH



Mr. Salem Moosa Hassan, Oman Diplomat

Theme: *Education beyond the Classroom – Raising Youth for our Future*



Ms. Souria Saad Zoy, Assistant to the Director UNESCO Youth Programme

Theme: *The Work of the UNESCO Youth Programme*



Mr. Ranjit Singh, Director of public affairs at the Representative Council of French Sikhs.

Theme: *The Human Race is One Race – Sikhisms contribution* – [Link to speech](#)



Ms. Lotifa Begum, Development Education Coordinator, Islamic Relief U.K.

Theme: *Values for Global Citizenship* – [Link to speech](#)



Mr. Xavier Giuavarc'h, President Forum Ploudaniel, V. President Bretagne Cooperation Humanitaire

Theme: *Experiences of empowering youth through informal education* www.forum-ploudaniel.net



Mr. Ewald Schenkermayr, European Youth Committee UPF

Theme: *Exploring Global Citizenship – the role of informal and value based education*

SESSION VI: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



Rt. Hon. Rhodri Morgan, First Minister of Wales (2000-2009)

Theme: *Human Resource Development in Small European Countries – Wales and the Nordics*



Amb. Dr. Walther Lichem, Former Head of Dept. Int. Organisations Austrian Min. for Foreign Affairs

Theme: *The Capacity for Otherness in Pluri-Identity Societies* – [Link to speech](#)



Imam Dr. Abduljalil Sajid JP, Chair Task-force European year of Inter-cultural Dialogue

Theme: *Islamic Human Development of Science and the Better Understanding of the Environment* – [Link to speech](#)



Admiral Jean Dufourcq, Director of Studies the Ecole Militaire in Paris, Editor of the *Journal Defence*

Theme: *No Security without Sustainable Security – Multiple Spaces and Multiple Causes of Conflict* – [Link to speech](#)



Laurent Ladouce, Director Centre for Culture and Peace - www.culture-et-paix.org

Theme: *A Philosophy of Peace and Human Development* – [Link to presentation](#) - [Link to speech](#)

SESSION VII: A Life in Service to Peace



Mr. Timothy Miller, Vice-Chair UPF Europe

Theme: *A Peace Loving Global Citizen – Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Autobiography* – [Link to presentation](#)



Monseigneur Jacques Gaillot, Bishop of Partenia

Theme: *Renouncing other people is renouncing oneself - a life given to others is successful* – [Link to speech](#)



Mr. Chansamone Voravong, President of FORIM

Theme: *FORIM and my experiences as a UPF Ambassador for Peace* – [Link to speech](#)

SESSION VIII: Vision, Projects and Recent Activities



Mrs. Brigitte Wada, President Women's Federation for World Peace, France

Theme: *An Overview of the work of WFWP – humanitarian projects, with the UN, Reconciliation*

[Link to speech](#) – [Link to presentation](#) - www.femmespourlapaix.org

Mr. Mark Brann, Secretary General UPF Europe

Theme: *Practicing Peace-building Principles – the Work of UPF*

