

Thomas G. Walsh  
May 26, 2020



UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION  
Peace Talks

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**UPF Africa "Peace Talks" Webinar**

**[Celebrating Africa Day 2020](#)**

**“Creating an Interdependent and Prosperous Africa in a World in Conflict at the Time of the Covid-19 Crisis”**

**May 25, 2020**

**Click on the following link:**

**[www,youtube,com/watch?v=-ezPYGd9k4M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ezPYGd9k4M)**

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In the early afternoon of May 25, 2020, UPF-Africa organised a first “Peace Talks” web conference on the theme “Creating an Interdependent and Prosperous Africa in a World in Conflict at the Time of the Covid-19 Crisis.” The webinar served as UPF celebration of the United Nations Africa Day for this year. The conference had more than 500 attendees individually or in small groups all over the continent and beyond.

**Rev. George Marcus Ogurie**, (*Sub-regional Director of UPF-West Africa*) served as the moderator. In his opening remarks, he mentioned that The Africa Day celebration is always an opportunity to

reflect on the African Union's transformation and achievements and also to renew commitments to realize the Africa Agenda 2063. UPF has been an active supporter of Africa Day for the past 8 years, hosting events in New York in partnership with the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union at the United Nations. The 2020 Africa Day theme is in concert with the theme of the African Union Summit.

The questions discussed among others were:

- What are the factors that can best contribute to the achievement of the African Union's peace and development objectives?
- How can we build a society of interdependent community and prosperity during this time of conflict and Covid19?
- How can UPF Founder's vision of a "Shining Africa" contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the African Union?

#### **Panelists:**

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**H.E. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan** (*ISCP Africa Chairman, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*) described a programs undertaken by the African Union, including the African Development Bank and the Lagos Plan of Action. In 2015, the president of the African Union set some goals for the Union's centennial in 2063, to transform Africa into a global economic

powerhouse. Dr. Jonathan called for increased trade among countries within Africa. There are more bureaucratic barriers to travel between African countries than there are for people visiting Africa from the United States. He called for economic interconnection, legitimate elections, ends to conflict and better childhood education in order to move the continent forward.

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**Dr. Thomas Walsh** (*Chairman of UPF International*) noted the COVID crisis has precipitated a global economic recession and exacerbated tensions between the United States and China, threatening world stability. The African Union has been given the role of maintaining stability in its region; therefore, in this time, its work is more vital than ever. He emphasized UPF's

desire to act as an ally and friend to Africa. Dr. Walsh congratulated all

Africans on Africa Day, and recognized the recent Muslim holiday, Eid al-Fitr that was celebrated on May 24.

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**H.E. Dr. Nevers Mumba** (*Former Vice President of Zambia, President of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy [MMD]*) gave some background on the history and purpose of Africa Day. Africa has produced great scholars, historians, scientists, doctors, and more, who have identified many

sources of problems on the continent. Dr. Nevers called for Africans to frame their own future in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, rather than allowing the rest of the world to dictate their place in it. He called for the promotion of African industry, commodities, culture and language. He called for unity among African countries, in order to better leverage Africa's population and natural resources on the world stage.

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**H.E. Delfim Santiago das Neves** (*President of the National Assembly of Sao Tome and Principe*) said Africa has many myths and prejudices that prevent its development. The individualistic and thirst of power of the leaders that have left the vast majority of the population lacking the basic needs for survival, are also some of these barriers. They must be addressed by fostering solidarity among

African countries be they white Africa or black Africa in a world of interdependence where nations can only prosper through good cooperation and partnership. He added that true African union will come to existence in this time if we follow the Founder's vision of peace, unity and harmony that Dr. Moon is promoting. Speaker Santiago das Neves concluded by saying that Africa has succeeded at mobilizing to follow WHO guidelines in order to stop the spread of COVID-19.

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**Hon. Marie-Laurence Sranon** (*Former Minister of Family, Social Affairs and MicroFinance, Republic of Benin*) began by paying tribute to all who lost their lives due to the pandemic. She called for increased, fairer compensation for Africa's natural resources. Young refugees are dying as they flee hardships. Africans must ask: why are young people dying to leave

the continent? Why are problems deteriorating? Who benefits from this situation? Hon. Sranon praised UPF's vision for peace and its alignment with the goals of the African Union.

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**Mrs. Katherine Rigney** (*Regional chair, UPF-Africa*) gave closing remarks with the following highlights:

- Since the 1960s, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, known as True Parents, the Founders of UPF, have great ambitions, particularly for the vitality and development of the African continent. - This conviction was confirmed by the declaration and the numerous initiatives of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon in Dakar and on the Island of Gorée during the First African Summit in Dakar in January 2018, which marked by the launch of the Heavenly Africa Project, "a Shining Africa." This new initiative, widely shared for the building of a New Africa, has enjoyed the support and adhesion of many personalities, governments and institutions.

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**Q&A:** In response to a question about members of the African diaspora returning to their roots, H.E. Dr. Mumba responded that the approach should be to develop solidarity between Africa and the diaspora in order to make sure that Africa's voice is heard and Africa gets the respect it deserves. H.E. Dr. Jonathan called for members of the diaspora to invest and participate in Africa's development. In response to a question about persons from one African ethnic group being viewed as foreigners in other African countries, H.E. das Neves called for leadership in order to resolve ethnic conflicts within Africa and encourage interconnections. An IAPP representative asked about approaches to combating COVID-19 without compromising investments in African economies. Hon. Sranon noted that this is a good time for Africans to learn technological skills. Panelists gave their final statements.

*- Report by Aidan Walsh*

Comments may be sent to [Africa.peacetalks@upf.org](mailto:Africa.peacetalks@upf.org)

Sincerely yours,

*Mrs. Katherine Rigney*

*Africa Regional Chair, Universal Peace Federation*

## Upcoming Events



MAY 30: [Decoding Parenting: Seven Weeks of the Family as a School of Love](#)

JUN 1: [UN Global Day of Parents](#)

JUN 30: [UN International Day of Parliamentarism](#)

JUL 18: [Nelson Mandela International Day](#)

AUG 19: [UN International Day of Peace](#)

AUG 19: [UN World Humanitarian Day](#)

## Contact Us

[www.upf.org](http://www.upf.org) | [e.news@upf.org](mailto:e.news@upf.org) | 220 White Plains Rd. FL5, Tarrytown, NY 10591, USA

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