

International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Chung Sik Yong
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Dhaka, Bangladesh—The speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Hon. Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury chaired the launching of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) in Dhaka, Bangladesh on October 21, 2016. Eighteen Bangladeshi members of Parliament (MPs) attended the event.

Speaker Chaudhury welcomed this initiative and saw the IAPP functioning “as a forum for parliamentarians to collaborate and work together to address the challenges in peace-building, drawing up measures and thereby promoting peace.”

She noted that although we live in a highly competitive, globalized world, “time and again we come back to values and systems of morality that guide us and hold our communities and societies together.”

The IAPP is a project of UPF and was launched in February this year in the Korean National Assembly building. Since then, regional conferences have been held in Nepal (the Asia-Pacific region), East Africa, West Africa, Europe and the Middle East, Central America and the Caribbean and South America. At the beginning of December, the North American chapter will be inaugurated.

Dr. Chung-sik Yong, chair of UPF-Asia, read the Founder’s Address, adding, “Peace is not static. It is created when people live more for others than for themselves, which is the essence of true love. Therefore, peace is based on unselfishness. Selfishness and greed will destroy peace.”

Two-time minister and current MP of Nepal, Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, chair of UPF-Nepal, gave a backgrounder related to the IAPP. In South Asia, national chapters have been launched in Nepal, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and, now, Bangladesh.

The IAPP, he said, would be 1) politically neutral; 2) emphasize dialogue as the first step to conflict resolution; 3) stress respect for all faith traditions; and, 4) most importantly, highlight the importance of the family as the cornerstone of peace, prosperity and patriotism.

Mr. Dhakal also gave an overview of the South Asia Peace Initiative (SAPI) because this event was both the launching of the IAPP and the 20th SAPI conference. In Nepal, SAPI played a key role in fostering open and honest dialogue among political parties who were engaged in a civil war for over a decade. Building on this success and as the Convener of SAPI, he was happy to announce that SAPI conferences have been held in six nations in South Asia.

Dr. Robert Kittel, education director of UPF-Asia, explained the five principles of UPF’s work and underscored its efforts to support the United Nations. UPF has held numerous programs at the UN headquarters in New York as well as at UN offices in Geneva, Vienna, Paris, Bangkok and Sri Lanka.

Hon. Kazi Firoz Rashid, a member of the Bangladesh Parliament and event coordinator, gave the closing remarks, thanking all those who participated in this landmark event. The emcee for the event was Mr. Santosh Paudel, vice president of UPF-Nepal.