Paris Professionals Reflect on Family as Everyday Peacemaker

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Paris, France – The United Nations' theme for this year's International Day of Peace – "Investing in Peace for All, Everywhere, Every Day" – brings the concept of peacebuilding very close to home. Reflecting this idea, UPF-France and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) organized a gathering on September 19, 2026, at UPF's Paris headquarters on the theme "The Family as an Everyday Peacemaker." The speakers offered thoughtful insights relevant to the complex realities of modern life.

The meeting was opened and moderated by **Ms. Brigitte Wada**, president of WFWP France. She welcomed the participants and recalled the history of the International Day of Peace and its importance in mobilizing civil society.









A Culture of Peace and Responsibility

The first speaker, **Mr. Jacques Marion**, president of UPF-France and Europe–Middle East, spoke on the theme "A Culture of Peace and Responsibility." He recalled the role played by the United Nations and UNESCO in promoting a culture of peace, emphasizing that such a culture involves the responsibility of every citizen. Drawing a connection with current debates in France concerning the prevention of gender-based and sexual violence, he stressed the importance of education and family responsibility in preventing

violent behavior. From the UPF perspective, a culture of peace begins with learning, within the family, the values of love, respect for others and a sense of responsibility.



Jacques Marion also recalled the call made by the founders of UPF for a conception of democracy based not only on rights, but also on responsibilities. From this perspective, the exercise of authority, whether political or social, should be guided by a sense of duty and service comparable to that exercised by parents towards their children. Finally, he addressed the growing fragility of marital relationships and its consequences for family life, emphasizing that the strength and stability of the family are not merely private matters, but also issues of social cohesion and democratic stability.



The Family as the First Place Where We Learn to Live Together

The second speaker, **Ms. Christine Jouan Bruneau**, president of the NGO "Femmes de Demain"

(Women of Tomorrow) and former deputy mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt in charge of family affairs, emphasized the fundamental role of the family as the first environment for education and learning how to live together. She explained how children gradually develop their personalities through the emotional and educational relationships they experience within their families. It is in this context that they learn respect for others, the rules of community life, responsibility and altruism.



Addressing the vulnerabilities that some families may experience, Ms. Bruneau emphasized the irreplaceable responsibility of parents, while also highlighting the role of the extended family, particularly grandparents, as well as the contribution of associations and social services when families face difficulties. She also stressed the need for a social environment and public policies that support families, notably by helping parents better reconcile family and professional life and by assisting them in their educational responsibilities. In conclusion, she recalled that, just as peace cannot simply be proclaimed but must be built, the family itself is built over time through commitment, education and transmission.



Words, the Family and Freedom of Thought

The third speaker, **Ms. Jennifer Lambert**, a member of the "Syndicat de la Famille" (Family Union),

joined the meeting by videoconference to address the theme "When Words Lose Their Meaning, We Lose Our Freedom." After recalling the educational, social and spiritual role of the family, she focused her presentation on language and its evolution in contemporary debates about the family. She presented the differences between a constructivist approach, according to which the forms and definitions of the family can evolve with society, and an anthropological approach that views the family, founded on the complementarity between man and woman, as a natural and structuring reality.



She illustrated her argument with several developments in French law and terminology, including the legal redefinition of marriage and changes in certain terms used to designate parenthood. These developments, she emphasized, demonstrate the importance of language in the way a society defines its reference points and transmits its understanding of reality. She concluded by calling for particular attention to language, the transmission of memory and family reference points, as well as the education of children and the exercise of discernment in relation to the media and social networks. Freedom of thought, she concluded, requires the ability to name and examine realities with clarity.

The Family as a "School of the Heart"

The final speaker, **Ms. Marie-Christine Odent**, a marriage and family counsellor, brought a particularly practical dimension to the meeting by sharing her professional experience in supporting couples and families. She recalled that peace begins within the family, where each person learns to listen, manage disagreements, respect others and heal wounds. The family can thus become a genuine "school of the heart," shaping the way we relate to others. She explained how emotional experiences during childhood can leave a lasting imprint and sometimes resurface later in married life. Past wounds can then contribute to conflict. Yet the couple can also become a place of healing and transformation through greater awareness, dialogue and a shared desire to grow together.

Family peace therefore does not mean the absence of conflict. Rather, it means learning to go through disagreements without humiliating or rejecting others, acknowledging one's mistakes, asking forgiveness and making amends. These experiences also provide valuable learning for children, who can thereby discover, in practical terms, the conditions necessary for reconciliation. Ms. Odent also emphasized that the family is a privileged environment in which we learn different forms of love: receiving, trusting, sharing, respecting differences, building through reciprocity, protecting and passing on what we have received. Simple daily practices - truly listening, choosing our words carefully, acknowledging our share of responsibility, or setting aside time for family dialogue - can thus contribute to developing a culture of trust, respect and reconciliation.

Positive Exchanges and Presentation of Certificates

The presentations prompted questions and reactions from the participants. The discussions highlighted the

richness and complementarity of the different approaches - institutional, educational, anthropological and relational - to the role of the family in building a culture of peace. Several participants praised the quality and professionalism of the presentations and expressed the wish that this reflection could be further developed and shared in their respective countries.



The meeting concluded with the presentation of Ambassador for Peace certificates to five participants engaged in diverse fields, including religious life, business, humanitarian action and education. Each had an opportunity to briefly present the area in which they are engaged, highlighting the diversity and complementarity of their backgrounds and their shared commitment to common values in the service of peace.