



United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week **“World Peace through Inter-religious Harmony - Co-operation based on Common Values”**

Oslo, Norway, February 21, 2020

By *Steinar Murud, national leader for Norway*

UPF Norway organized a program on the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week on Thursday 20th February. The event was entitled «World Peace through Interfaith Harmony – cooperation based on common values».

The program was in partnership with the network «My Neighbor», which is an initiative started by the local minister in the Church of Norway. In addition, the mosque Central Jamaat E Ahle Sunnat (our largest mosque) was both a partner and the venue.

The welcome address was done by the son of the imam, who also spoke in our event as a teenager 9 years ago.

The first speaker in the panel was a former minister in president Rabbanis Afghani government in the early 90ies. He escaped to Norway when Taliban took over in Afghanistan and is now well integrated in Norway. His main topic was our common brotherhood as children of the same set of parents, Adam and Eve.

The second speaker was a Jewish filmmaker who has won several prizes during 30 years for his productions. At present he is thinking of a film project that can illustrate the connection between all the Abrahamic faiths.

Our third speaker was the head monk from the Sri Lanka Buddhist temple in Oslo. He elaborated on the principle of how inner peace effects all our surroundings. He specified the importance of our motivation and intention, this is where goodness begins.

Our fourth speaker was the minister in the local Church of Norway. She spoke of the importance of meetings between people of different religious backgrounds. However, she pointed out that the purpose is to gain understanding, not necessarily to agree. Religions have their differences and we have to live with that.

The fourth speaker was the leader of UPF who presented the «World Scripture», and spoke of the history, background and purpose behind this significant book. He said parallel societies with little contact across them, can become a problem. One should always try to find the common values and cooperate based on them.

A ceremony of lighting candles was done. Each representative lit a candle. Finally, the imam insisted to lit the candle together with the UPF leader and so they did.

The formal program closed with a roundtable talk centered on prepared questions from the MC. Refreshments and social mingling closed the evening. The event was also covered by a local Oslo newspaper.