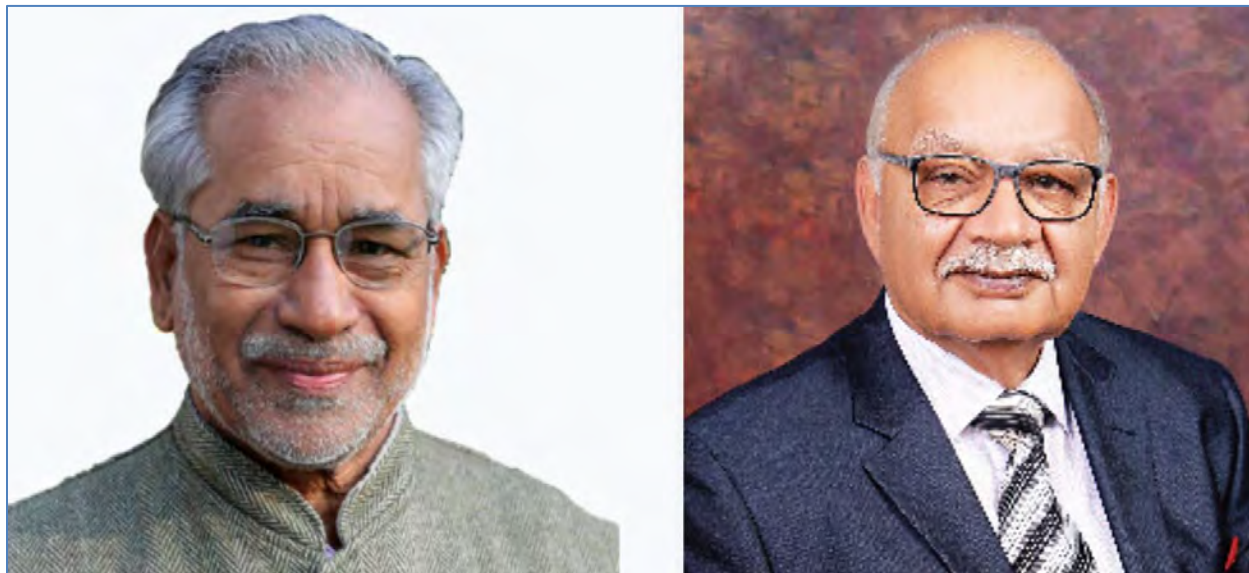


UPF Melbourne, Australia: 75 prominent peace activists observe Day of Peace

Greg Stone
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Melbourne, Australia -- Seventy-five prominent peace activists and Ambassadors for Peace met online for two hours on September 18, 2021, for a conference hosted by UPF-Australia to discuss the theme of this year's UN International Day of Peace, "Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World." The overall sentiment of the event was that there can be no peace without justice, and that peace builds prosperity.

The moderators were **Mr. Daniel Meadows**, *chair of Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) Oceania*, an affiliated organization, and **Mr. Will Abdo**, *assistant vice president of UPF-Australia, Victoria and CEO of Webtrade Marketing*.



The first keynote was given by **Prof. N. Radhakrishnan**, *chairman of the Indian Council of Gandhian Studies in New Delhi, founder of the Gandhi Media Foundation and general convener for the Gandhi Peace Mission 2015*.

Prof. Radhakrishnan said the UN has played a significant role in fostering peace, but needs to become a more democratic institution empowering all its member states to ask the question: "How much is the United Nations a representative of humanity?" He said, "There is a general feeling that the 15-member Security Council should be enlarged. ...The UN must become a parliament of humanity, because veto power needs rethinking."

The second keynote was given by **Mrs. Molly Harriss Olson**, *CEO of Fairtrade Australia and New*

Zealand.

Mrs. Olson was recognized by Yale University with a Distinguished Alumni Award in 2020 for her "exceptional contributions to global environmental and economic sustainability and the development of ethical supply chains." She served as the executive director of U.S. President Bill Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development at the White House from 1992 to 1996.

Mrs. Olson spoke on the topic, "Peace – the Essential Ingredient for Sustainability and Prosperity." She argued that there can be no peace without justice, and added that "fair trade" on a global level builds trust, trust builds peace and peace builds prosperity. Mrs. Olson continued, contending that for the first time a world in which small producers and workers can enjoy secure and sustainable livelihoods is within our grasp. Fairtrade as a global organization plays a significant role in changing the way trade works. It provides better prices, decent working conditions and a fairer deal for farmers and workers in developing countries.

Mrs. Linda Young is a *minister* and currently undertaking a doctorate in exploring the use of art and creativity to help people find peace and meaning. She has three bachelor's degrees in teaching, education and theology.

The theme of her talk was, "Centring Journey to Inner Peace – An Unprecedented Opportunity." Mrs. Young underscored the need for inner peace and outlined the practices underpinning the ancient practice of spiritual direction used by Christian spiritual mystics. Its main pillars are contemplative listening, the practice of silence, discernment and prayer. Mrs. Young said, "The longest I have ever spent in silence is seven days. It takes a day or two for the mind to slow down and empty, but when it does, the peace that rises is extraordinary. It helps to bring perspective back to the moment, and to the essence of what it means to be alive."

Dr. Shahid Yamin, *executive chairman and co-founder of Global Opportunities Commercialisation (GOC)*, has come up with the concept of "Smart Institute" to develop appropriate technology-based entrepreneurs in poorer regions of the world.

The GOC executive team strongly believes that social and economic empowerment are the drivers of peace in the world community. Dr. Yamin spoke on "The Role of Multifaceted Variables in Universal Peace." He highlighted that peace is part of a bigger equation of multifaceted variables, each of which interact in different ways. Peace is a mindset which needs to be consciously promoted, and social change can only occur when concurrent action is undertaken at all levels. Poverty, the arms race, global politics of war and climate change are the variables that have a close relationship with peace.

Mr. Shahid shared: "Peace is not the absence of war; peace is justice, equity and harmony. For the past 100 years, billions of dollars have been invested in various actions related to poverty [eradication] with limited results. A focus on generational poverty will provide far better results. Each child inherits and perpetuates a poverty mindset, or on the other hand, a growth mindset." Additionally, he underlined that we cannot have a peaceful world when we blatantly sanction the arms race in the name of peace: "We are the victims of the politics of war in the name of peace!"

Concluding remarks were given by **Dr. John Bellavance**, *vice president of UPF-Australia and coordinator of the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP)-Oceania*.

Dr. Bellavance spoke about "Peace Building Leadership Skills in the Global Village." He emphasized that lasting peace is secured not merely through government backed laws, but by a raising awareness of our universal solidarity as one human family. The loss of values in our world is causing materialism. Using other human beings for one's own sake ultimately destroys relationships.

Mr. Bellavance argued for a holistic approach to peace. Reason, theism, humanism and materialism must not be separated. Secular humanism must not ignore spiritual values. Self-centred materialism must be controlled, guided by higher ideals. Spiritual values must be guided by reason. In addition, we need a "Head Wing" approach, as the political left and right both are needed to solve national and global problems. He said, "neither the right, nor the left will save us."

The conference was supported by the Women's Federation for World Peace-Australia, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification-Australia, Center for Global Nonkilling, Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fair Trade Australia and New Zealand, Global Opportunities Commercialisation, Global Somali Diaspora and Nelson Mandela International Day.