

# UPF Denmark celebrated the International Day of Peace 2016

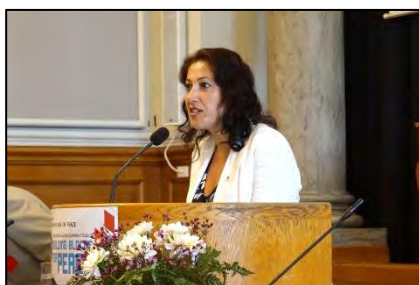
Copenhagen, Denmark, 18. September 2016



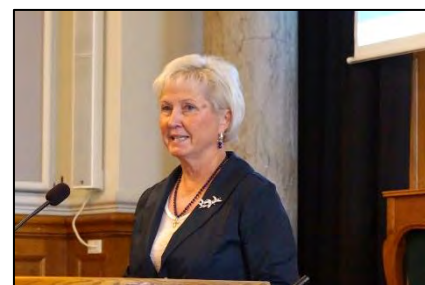
By Karsten Nielsen

Sunday Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time UPF Denmark celebrated the UN International Day of Peace in the Danish parliament at Christiansborg in Copenhagen. The event was held in the beautiful Common Room and was hosted by **MP Yildiz Akdogan**. The 150-seat room was filled with Ambassadors for Peace, NGO's, civil leaders, religious leaders, artists and enthusiasts for peace.

The theme was "The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace". The SDG's are the



prerequisite for peace and necessary for all countries. People have despite their differences very similar needs. We need security, but also to be heard and understood. Only when thus obtaining a common, warm feeling between the people and the government, will it be possible to create unity with common goals and direction, which will create hope. It is important to communicate these comprehensive goals to the world's people and leaders, so that we with Ban Ki-Moon's words: "... look beyond our national borders and shortsighted interests and instead act in solidarity with the long-term goals - *We can no longer allow ourselves to think and work in silos.*"



The event was moderated by UPF **Ambassador for Peace and former MP Marion Pedersen**.

She first introduced the **president of "Women Deliver" Katja Iversen**, who sent a video greeting from New York. Women Deliver is an international NGO and leading global advocate for girls' and women's health, rights, and wellbeing. Katja mentioned that when women are present around the negotiating table, the chances for peace are greater. Women's role is so important and we need more women around the table.

The first speaker present was **professor PH.D. Steen Hildebrandt**, one of the most respected speakers in Denmark



Third speaker was a popular **talk show and radio host Lotte Heise**. She spoke very lively about sustainability in daily life, in the way we move around, eat, use resources etc. She emphasized the importance of the way parents bring up and educate their children and youngsters, the importance of close human relationships, we do not exist for ourselves, but we are associated with others. Therefore we are responsible for the way we express and behave ourselves and we need to include and reach out to others in the way we express ourselves rather than to create distance and build barriers.



The fourth speaker was journalist and **world affairs correspondent on the national TV station, Simi Jan**. She talked very empathetic about people she met in the hotspots of the world. She witnessed horrible situations around the world and saw people pleading for help. Of course she couldn't help in the situation as a correspondent, but she hopes through her reports to show that those are people who have dreams and hopes like all of us and show that there are more that bind us together than divide us. The sorrow of a mother who losses her son is the same whether she is from

Afghanistan, from Africa or from Denmark; we must NEVER forget the sorrow of other people!

In the break sandwiches and drinks were served and there was a happy and lively sharing among the participants.



The fifth speaker was **entrepreneur and lecturer Gry Ravn**. Only one week earlier she was initiator and director of probably Europe's largest integration event, a big "welcome party" for refugees with more than 10.000 people in a large concert hall in Copenhagen. Here she gathered large companies, municipalities, organizations, NGO's, artists, experts, media etc. to meet and welcome refugees, network, find solutions to good integration, learn from "best practices" and so on.

One year ago after addressing the ills in the world on Facebook, she was challenged by her friend asking "Why don't you do something yourself?" From feeling powerless as a single mother she started to think what she could do. After a posting on Facebook asking who had "something to put in a suitcase" she got 200 tons of emergency aid in 5 days!! In the media she was criticized by Red Cross for not knowing what she was doing. That challenged her to develop partnerships with Red Cross and freight forwarders and she managed to get 9 containers and two trucks of emergency aid to Lesbos in Greece.

Now she is doing projects not only to help other people, but to show the importance of working together, to create partnerships and make people believe in and experience their own power, that each one can do something and make a difference.

The last speaker was **lecturer and firebrand Tommy Krabbe**, who said our greatest challenge are to work and unite across borders. We live in "silos", we identify ourselves in communities, associations, clubs etc., but we need to reach out to others in other "silos". We human beings ARE adjusted to each other . . . take the example of feeding a baby, the baby automatically open its mouth 😊 Science also proves that knowledge begets friendship. We need



when it comes to management, organization and society and current with a new book about the SDG's. He spoke about the "The goals of the world - a present and a necessity" and explained that in Denmark we decided to call the SDG's "**Goals of the world**" which in fact is a better expression. Apart from religious teachings the SDG's are the most ambitious plan for development ever set up. Religious visions and teachings are important, but the SDG's are above the religions, they are for ALL people and they prompt us to **LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND**, all people have equal value. Therefore it is also a demanding principle to comply with. The SDG's are a necessity and a matter of urgency. He mentioned two important questions to research: What can Denmark contribute to the implementation of the SDG's in the world? and what can we learn from other countries? He quoted former prime minister of Bhutan, Jigme Thinley, who said that sustainability is more a question about joy and humanity rather than a question about economic development and getting richer. Thus we need a paradigm shift from focusing on material wealth to more focus on people. His presentation was like a sermon with deep insights.



to seek others, try to understand each other and build things together. That can be challenging, but Tommy gave following three advices which might help us: first we need a new slogan “Ignoramus”, I don’t know - we do NOT know what other people think, feel, wish etc. . . , we should not delude ourselves that we know everything. All knowledge starts with “not knowing”. Second we are ALL great human beings and there are no reasons to blow ourselves up, then we can start sharing deeply with each other and thirdly there is no reason to demote other people, they are also great people, we need confidence and trust to build relationships; trust is a risky pre-performance.

Then the audience rose for the singalong “**What a Wonderful World**” led by opera singer Ingeborg Børch and 2nd gen Sibeal Hill.

**Dr. Thorkil Christensen from UPF** introduced the **Peace Ceremony** and vision of UPF. He said that UPF advocates for religious representatives to be included in the work of the UN. The religions exist in order to create peace. It is essential that the religions

use their wisdom to educate their followers to become true world citizens. On the stage there was a small tree decorated with the “17 Goals of the world” symbolizing all the nations and peoples of the world and the “Goals of the world” as its fruits. The tree needs water in order to become fruitful and thus nine religious leaders took the first step to water it. UPF are convinced that the UN will be strengthened if the religions become involved as respected partners in the peace work of the UN. In a solemn atmosphere with the peaceful music of J.S. Bach “Schafe können sicher weiden” the religious leaders passed one by one and poured their water to the tree.

This was followed by cultural performances of high class.



First by **classic guitarist Kaare Norge**, one of Denmark’s finest instrumentalists. On the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Carl Nielsen, Kaare Norge made a tribute to his fellow Danish musician by releasing his 23<sup>rd</sup> album in his series of excellent guitar art with music of Carl Nielsen. Kaare Norge played three pieces from this album. The audience was awestruck by the mesmerizing beauty.



This was followed by **mezzosoprano Ingeborg Børch with pianist Rune Skov Thomassen**. She had her debut on the Danish Royal Theater in 2010. Her first song, Händel’s “Ombra Mai Fu” - also about a tree giving shade and peace - was followed by Seguedille from Carmen, Somewhere Over the Rainbow and La Vie en Rose from Edith Piaf, all related to the process of creating peace.

All participants felt so inspired by the speeches and was emotional uplifted by the beautiful music and songs. At the end Thorkil Christensen briefly introduced and invited participants for the **Peace Road event** in Copenhagen the following Sunday.

<https://vimeo.com/186056373>

