



UPF Denmark celebrated UN International Day of Peace 2017

Copenhagen, Denmark, 24. September 2017



By Karsten Nielsen

Sunday September 24th for the 4th time UPF Denmark celebrated the UN International Day of Peace, this time in the UN City in Copenhagen, one of Copenhagen's noticeable landmarks. The characteristic white eight-fingered star is located on Marble Pier in the Northern Harbor of Copenhagen, being certified Platinum by LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) and the winner of the European Commission's Green Building Award.



MP **Yildiz Akdogan** welcomed the 150 audience of current and former MPs, religious leaders, NGO and other civil leaders, Ambassadors for Peace, artists and firebrands for peace. In her welcoming address Yildiz Akdogan said it is important not to divide people in "them and us", rather we need a joint and committed cooperation.

Talk show and radio host **Lotte Heise** introduced the theme, "Together for Peace - Respect, Safety & Dignity for All" and urged everybody to be vigilant and committed towards these goals and pointed out that it is important for parents also to involve their children in these efforts.



Former EU commissioner and government minister **Connie Hedegaard** mentioned that many of today's crisis are due to increasing inequality, lack of concern for the environment etc... Instead we need to follow a new development and growth model laid out by the SDGs, this does



NOT only concern the developing countries, it concerns North AND South, ALL of us, even though it has not yet dawned on some of us in Europe.



Professor **PH.D. Steen Hildebrandt** said the SDGs - probably the most important decision made since the founding of UN in 1948 - are the beginning of a new paradigm shift, a revolution. The industrial revolution made the Western world very rich, but kept many people outside. The key principle in the SDGs are "LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND". He talked about a spiritual transformation and said we need to educate the next generation to have a global view and understanding, to become global citizens! This development has just started and still moves slowly, but it will accelerate like a rolling snowball. The key is the change of our minds and understanding that change starts with myself. After that human behavior can easily be changed.

In the 30 minutes break sandwiches, chocolates and drinks were served and there was very happy and lively sharing among all participants.



The fourth presenter was author and mentor **Kirsten Stendevad**. She also emphasized that we need to focus on internal instead of external development. We are now moving from the yang paradigm, a more masculine energy to the yin paradigm, a more feminine oriented energy. She said, we are all in the same boat, all of us with the same hopes, same fears etc., but in the feminine energy we will all be connected to each other.

The last speaker was nurse **Merete Bonde Pilgaard**, founder of "Venligboerne" (which might be translated as "Kind Citizens"). As a nurse Merete Bonde Pilgaard noticed that only showing kindness influenced the health and wellbeing of her patients. In 2013 that motivated her to start a campaign about meeting others with



kindness. After it spread in her municipality, the members also started to practice kindness towards refugees, and it caused the movement to spread rapidly all over Denmark and even to neighboring countries with 160.000 members.

Merete Bonde Pilgaard was often asked about what are her methods and principles behind the movement, and she just replied "kindness". Then she thought that was a too simple answer, but after thorough contemplation she found that in fact it was the correct answer, because it is only about meeting others with kindness, thus EVERYBODY can be included and involved. All of us know what is kindness, even though we do not always practice it. She emphasized the vital role of parents and family, to become role models, both parents and children needs each other to grow and develop.

Led by Elizabeth Bramsen the audience standing sang "We Are the World".



Dr. Thorkil Christensen, Co-Chairman UPF Denmark introduced the Peace Ceremony and invited a group of religious representatives as well as all participants present to participate. The

religious leaders representing Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam and Sikhism gathered in a half circle on the stage each with a bottle with water. Thorkil Christensen asked them through prayer, thoughts and feelings also to fill the bottle with the longing of their hearts, a symbol that we all together contribute each in our way and unite in fulfilling our common goals. He too asked all participants to rise, join hands, and with closed eyes also offer prayers and send heartfelt thoughts to the millions of people we hope to reach out to. In a solemn atmosphere with quiet music the religious representatives simultaneously poured their water in a common glass bowl. Hand in hand everybody was deeply moved by participating in this beautiful ceremony.





The cultural performances started with the Danish-Swedish soprano Anna **Karina Sundstedt** and one of Denmark's finest young pianists, Janus Araghipour. They performed four pieces in four different languages, all related to peace and spreading love and joy, among them an aria from La Rondine of Puccini and Höre ich Zigeunergeigen from Gräfin Mariza and Somewhere Over the Rainbow.

They were followed by two young violin virtuosos, **Valdemar & Villads Littauer Bendixen**, only 18 and 15 years old. Both attend Bach Music



College in Berlin and have won many awards and gold medals in international music competitions. Despite their young age they have already been touring in the world.

They played a mix of Vivaldi's Four Seasons and AC/DC Thunderstruck, Tango Jalousie by Jacob Gade, the Swan from Saint-Saens Carnival Of The Animals and Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen.

Everyone was moved and uplifted by the messages, music, songs and ceremony - and felt it was a substantial contribution to peace.



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

We were so glad to find that the messages repeated in all the presentations were "peace starts with me" and in my family which are in line with True Mothers "Peace Starts with Me" campaign. Because of True Parents guidance and foundation, we could hold such a successful event. For that we all are very grateful!