

The launch of the Cameroon chapter of IAPP in the Cameroonian Parliament

Edwin Plekhanov
March 28, 2018



Yaoundé, Cameroon -- The launch of the Cameroon chapter of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) took place on March 28, 2018, in the Cameroonian Parliament. Among the 150 people present were four vice presidents of the National Assembly and one vice president of the Senate; one senator and 57 parliamentarians; the South African high commissioner to Cameroon and a representative from the government of Chad; many representatives from Cameroon's government, including three current ministers; and university professors, clergy, journalists, Ambassadors for Peace, and other dignitaries. The ceremony was held at the hemicycle of the National Assembly, where ordinary and extraordinary parliamentary sessions are held twice yearly.

The Conference was held under the theme "Parliamentary Action Day for Peace and Conflict Resolution and Launching of International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace-Cameroon Chapter." It was organized in partnership with the National Assembly of Cameroon and presided over by the speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Cavayé Yégué Djabril. Due to a delay in his flight schedule, he was initially represented by the senior vice president of the National Assembly, Hon. Etong Ndzok Hilarion. It was co-chaired by the quester of Parliament, Hon. Awudu Mbaya Cyprian, who has participated in IAPP events in Korea, Burkina Faso and Senegal, and Hon. Kamsoulou Abba Kabir, who participated in the 2018 World Africa Summit in Senegal.

The ceremony opened with a speech by the executive president for the IAPP-Cameroon chapter, Hon. Cyprian, who gave a background into the creation and inauguration of IAPP in different parts of the world, in Senegal and now in Cameroon. He asked parliamentarians to take action to foster peace, and he asked everyone to adopt the culture and language of peace everywhere they went and with whoever they met. After that, the keynote address of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon at the global inauguration of IAPP was read by the president of Cameroon's chapter of the Womens Federation for World Peace (WFWP), Mrs. Akele Consoler.

A representative from the Ministry of Social Affairs, who spoke on "Peace and Stability". The minister of Women Empowerment and the Family, Professor Marie-Thérèse Abena Ondoua, spoke on "Family, Peace Building and Reconciliation". She expressed her desire to work in collaboration with IAPP in fulfilling her ministerial duties and urged representatives of IAPP to extend their activities to remote areas of the nation where peace is threatened. Next was the minister of environment, who spoke on "Climate Change Threats to Peace".

After this, a speech was presented by the speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Cavaye Yegue Djabril, declaring the launch of IAPP – Cameroon Chapter. He explained that this event follows the World Africa Summit in Dakar, Senegal, presided over by President Macky Sall and IAPP Founder Dr. Moon, where members of the Cameroon National Assembly participated in various sessions. It is in this light, he said,

that IAPP is being launched in Cameroon today. He emphasized that peace is imperative as our nation is going through three major crises. He asked parliamentarians to mobilize all their resources towards building and maintaining peace in their constituencies. Hon. Djibril called on parliamentarians and all who were present to express their desire for peace by signing the Yaoundé Declaration, to which they positively responded.

The Yaoundé Declaration was read by Rev. Edwin Plekhanov, who was introduced as UPF's Permanent Representative in Cameroon, and signed by participants. This was followed by the induction of new Ambassadors for Peace. Certificates were presented to the senior vice president, 12 parliamentarians, two senators, two ministers, three clergy and two civic leaders who have been actively promoting peace during the past years. The executive president of IAPP, Hon. Awudu Mbaya, explained that these awards are meant as an encouragement to do more and inspire others so that the message of peace can reach every corner in words and actions. The morning session concluded at 2:00 p.m. with a group photo and refreshments.

An afternoon working session was co-chaired by Hon. Djibril and the IAPP executive president. The session began with an exposition on "Causes and Resolutions of Conflicts" presented by Mbu Manchang Pius, representing UPF-Cameroon, who explained that conflict in society is rooted in the family and its resolution must start there. This was followed by a presentation by the KONRAD association, an NGO working on environmental problems and climate change, and a presentation by the Cameroon's delegate general for national security. After this, participants watched a video presentation Summit.

The floor was then opened to questions and discussion. There was a request calling on IAPP members to serve as mediators between the government and citizenry, especially in the current Anglophone crisis, which was openly discussed.

After this, the co-chair asked those present to adopt proposed resolutions that had previously been presented to them. The audience was in unanimous agreement which were present in the package given to each of them. There was a unanimous reply from the audience that they have already signed the resolutions and need not to review them but to take action. Hon. Djibril then gave closing remarks.

Hon. Awudu Mbaya Cyprian was interviewed by all mainstream media outlets, and this was shown as headline news over national radio and television. And Rev. Edwin Plekhanov said in a media interview, "This is the beginning of a Peace Project in Cameroon."

A working project has been set between IAPP and the Cameroon Parliament.

