

Universal Children's Day 2015 Observed in Argentina

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Buenos Aires, Argentina—UPF-Argentina commemorated the Universal Children's Day 2015 with an event on November 19, 2015 at the Peace Embassy. The speakers were Marita Copes, a specialist in corporate social responsibility and sustainable development, and Rosetta Conti, an educator. The event also included a discussion about protecting children's rights and the responsibilities of parents' as well as the role of the family and school in and the opportunity the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) presents to advance this.

The program was opened by Miguel Werner, secretary general of UPF-Argentina, who showed a video about UPF. Then, a video about the impact the Syrian conflict and other wars has had on children was shown. More than 10,000 children have lost their lives in the conflict, and thousands have been separated from their families. As stated in UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's message for this day: "This observance...comes following the landmark adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which can point the way towards peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies for all. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will depend crucially on reaching the most vulnerable children."

Mrs. Copes, director of Código R, spoke about the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the law Argentina passed in 2005 (26.061) which broadens the protection of rights of children and adolescents. Mrs. Copes also showed a brief video that compares these rights with the articles of the National Constitution. She also spoke about how UNICEF had asked her to promote child rights in corporate social responsibility programs, and Código R's ENAS Program (Sustainable Adolescent Girl Effect) which has, since 2003, worked to protect the rights of children (up to 18 years old).

Mrs. Conti, president of the Women Federation for World Peace in Argentina, reflected on the responsibilities of bringing a new being into this world: material aspects must not only be considered, but also emotional and spiritual ones. She mentioned parents lack the time to share and talk with their children, as well as understand their children's fears and respond to their curiosities. "We, adults, have to educate [and] re-educate ourselves." She emphasized that children have the right to have an ideal, be happy, and be taught how to distinguish and hear their inner voice. She proposed ways to help children maintain and cultivate values and feelings that help them develop good character, which contributes to society. "By recovering values, as a starting point, we can develop a more respectful society, with healthier and more equal relations for all."

After a break, there was a discussion about how to integrate the SDGs so that successfully delivers for all children. Questions that were asked were: What are the priorities in the "transition to sustainability," established in the 17 goals for 2030? What needs to be put into action for the integral development of children and adolescents? What are the challenges of parents, educators, organizations, governments, and companies in protecting children's rights? What changes need to be made "here and now"? How are a culture of peace, the new paradigm of education and neuroscience related? The complexity of these issues makes clear the need for all stakeholders to renew their commitments and work together to advance the rights and well-being of every child.