

UPF International: Inspiring the Next Generation of African Leaders

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Africa Day 2025 Celebration - Mvezo-Komkulu, South Africa



Your Royal Highnesses, Nkosi ZMD Mandela

Esteemed Members of the Royal House of Mandela,

Honourable Elders,

Distinguished Guests,

And most of all, the vibrant youth of Africa,

I virtually stand before you today in the sacred village of Mvezo-Komkulu, not only with great humility but with a deep sense of reverence - reverence for the memory of Nelson Mandela, the father of this land, and for the vision of Africa rising.

I bring heartfelt greetings from the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and our global Co-Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han. On this day of continental reflection and renewal, I am honoured to share a message grounded in our Founder's enduring commitment to Africa, and to speak on a subject that lies at the very heart of the continent's future: Inspiring African Youth Leadership.

As you may recall, UPF had the honour of co-organizing the 100th birthday of Nelson Mandela right here in Mvezo on July 18, 2018, which marked the reaffirmation of our close and respectful relationship with the Royal House of Mandela.

Today, as we observe Africa Day 2025, we do so not merely to celebrate what is - but to awaken what can be.

Dear friends,

Africa is young. Africa is gifted. Africa is rising ! But Africa's youth cannot walk forward unless they first understand where they came from. This is why Dr. Hak Ja Han, in her love for this continent, never ignored its painful history. On the contrary, she embraced it with prayer and tears.

She personally went to Gorée Island, the infamous slave port off the coast of Senegal, and there she stood with young people to pray - not only to remember the horror of what had been suffered, but to plant the seeds of healing and transformation. She also visited the Hector Pieterse Memorial in Soweto - a place that symbolizes the courage and sacrifice of South Africa's youth - and there she prayed again, this time that the young generation might never forget the cost of justice, but also never remain prisoners of the past.

She echoed the wisdom that says:

"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."

Holy Mother Han, as we lovingly call her, believes that Africa's youth must know the truth of history - but choose forgiveness, choose hope, choose to create a better tomorrow.

This is why, at UPF, we are not content to simply call for education - we call for character education. We advocate not only for skills and jobs, but for values and vision.

Dr. Hak Ja Han teaches that the greatest power is not economic or political - it is moral leadership. Leadership anchored in the truth that we are One Family Under God - black or white, rich or poor, from the village or the capital - all created with dignity, all destined to love and serve.

That is the foundation of her many initiatives that place young people at the center of global transformation.

Because the youth of Africa must not only be trained - they must be trusted. They must not only inherit the past - they must co-author the future.

Nelson Mandela was a young man when his conscience awakened. So was Martin Luther King Jr. So was Mahatma Gandhi. The world's turning points have always been led by the clarity and courage of youth. The same is true today in Africa.

But that courage must be guided. And that guidance must come from families, from schools, from faith leaders, and from elders like you, who have walked the road before.

Let us not give Africa's youth only laptops and hashtags. Let us give them moral clarity, self-respect, and a sense of sacred responsibility. Let us teach them that true freedom is not the license to do as one pleases, but the strength to do what is right.

As UPF and its associations continue our mission in Africa and the world, we pledge to walk with you - the Royal House of Mandela and the people of this great land - to raise youth who are not defined by what they escaped, but by what they build.

To every young person here today:

You are not the future - you are the present with a future.

You are not victims of your history - you are heirs of greatness.

You are not prisoners of resentment - you are ambassadors of reconciliation and hope.

Let us walk together, with a new generation of African leaders - rooted in character, driven by vision, and united as One Family Under God.

May God bless the youth of Africa.

May God bless the legacy of Nelson Mandela.

And may Africa Day 2025 be remembered as the day a new fire was lit - in the hearts of the next generation.

Thank you for your kind attention,

Dr. Tageldin Hamad
President of UPF International