

UPF International: Embracing Our Global Family in 2026

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As we welcome the dawn of 2026, I extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt gratitude to all leaders of Universal Peace Federation worldwide, and to our dedicated Ambassadors for Peace. The year 2025 was highlighted by the successful culmination of World Summit 2025, which convened current and former heads of state, legislators, diplomats, scholars, religious leaders and civil society leaders from every continent. Under the theme "Contemporary Challenges to World Order: Establishing a New Era of Peace and Prosperity," participants addressed global issues ranging from conflict resolution and climate change to sustainable development and women's leadership. World Summit 2025 stands as a foundation upon which we now build our next steps.

On January 1st, we unite in observing two significant occasions: Global Family Day and the World Day of Peace. Global Family Day reminds us that humanity is one family and invites us to celebrate peace and shared fellowship not merely as ideals, but as a lived reality within our reach. The World Day of Peace, established in 1968 by Pope Paul VI, reaffirms our conviction that peace must not only be hoped for, but intentionally prepared and diligently safeguarded. Together, these observances resonate deeply with UPF's vision. They affirm that beyond nationality, ethnicity, or creed, the human family shares a common moral destiny shaped by our capacity to serve, forgive, and uplift one another. We hope that the year 2026 reminds us that peace is a daily responsibility, to be cultivated in every community and sustained through every relationship.

In a meaningful affirmation of the spirit of service, the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (IVY). It is a global call to action, urging all sectors of society to elevate volunteerism as a vital force in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. IVY aligns closely with SDG 17 and with UPF's longstanding commitment to partnerships through initiatives such as the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), including collaboration with organizations such as the African Union, the European Union, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), and the United Nations Association of Civilizations

(UNAOC). IVY recognizes volunteers as indispensable partners in building a more just and sustainable world; from alleviating poverty and protecting the environment to advancing education and public health. UPF stands ready to amplify this momentum through its global network.

At the heart of UPF's founding ethos is the principle of "living for the sake of others" as the highest expression of leadership. As we enter the International Year of Volunteers, I encourage every UPF region and Ambassador for Peace to initiate or expand community service projects, whether in humanitarian relief, educational outreach, or environmental stewardship, to transform compassion into action. By offering our time and talents in service, we give life to what UPF founders described as true love: the understanding that our own fulfillment is inseparable from the well-being of others. In doing so, we affirm that lasting peace is built upon selfless service and genuine care.

Dr. Hak Ja Han consistently reminds us to sustain an unwavering hope and uphold UPF as a global moral compass, a parental presence for the world, offering a clear and uplifting vision even amid uncertainty. Guided by the founders' example, we affirm universal spiritual values, honor the sanctity of family, and promote forgiveness and cooperation among all people. UPF's guiding principles of interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universal values will continue to find tangible expression through our initiatives in 2026.

Across Asia, the Americas, Africa, Oceania, Europe, and the Middle East, our regional conferences will convene Ambassadors for Peace alongside government and civil society partners to develop concrete, values-based strategies for peacebuilding. At the same time, our interreligious efforts, anchored in the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), will intensify. In a world where misunderstanding among faiths too often fuels division, UPF will persist in bringing religious leaders and believers of all traditions together in a spirit of mutual respect, shared responsibility, and common purpose.

Finally, on behalf of the Universal Peace Federation, I extend my deepest appreciation to our partners, donors, and volunteers for your steadfast dedication throughout 2025. As we turn the page to 2026, let us do so with renewed hope, determination, and solidarity. Founded over twenty years ago on a promise to help usher in a world of peace, UPF continues to carry that promise forward, alive in the hearts and actions of each one of us.

Happy New Year to you and your families! May our collective efforts in the year ahead bring ever greater unity and harmony to the one human family we are privileged to serve.