

UPF and IAFLP Webinar Highlights Women's Role in Peacebuilding

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Bangkok, Thailand – In observance of Women's History Month, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) convened a global webinar on March 2, 2026, entitled "No Peace Without Women." The program highlighted the critical role of women in peace processes, conflict prevention, and human security. Around 140 women from 22 countries joined the event.



Opening the program, UPF-Asia Pacific President **Ms. Ursula McLackland** underscored the mission of IAFLP to affirm and elevate the leadership of first ladies and women leaders in advancing peace and development. She noted that while women and children are often the most vulnerable in times of conflict,

women are also uniquely positioned to serve as mediators, bridge-builders, and contributors to resolving complex deadlock situations.

Delivering a special message, **H.E. Shiranthi Rajapaksa**, former first lady of Sri Lanka, emphasized the indispensable role of women in peacebuilding efforts. She stressed that the steadfast commitment of women leaders around the world demonstrates that peace remains possible even in the most challenging circumstances.



Ms. Carolyn Handschin, president of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (Geneva), clarified that the "No Peace Without Women" campaign does not seek to displace men from leadership, but rather calls for the empowerment and mobilization of women and girls. She concluded by affirming that peace is never beyond reach, but awaits collective action to bring it to fruition.

Representing UPF-Philippines, vice president **Ms. Annie Andanar** declared that "No Peace Without Women" is not merely a slogan, but a reality. She emphasized that sustainable peace is intentionally designed, protected, and strengthened through women's active leadership and participation.

Dr. Ludivina Borja Dedit, director of the Peace and Human Security Institute of Western Mindanao State University in the Philippines, shared insights from her personal experience of living through conflict in Mindanao. She stressed that the inclusion of women in peacebuilding initiatives is essential, noting how women often sustain families and communities in post-conflict environments despite systemic challenges.

Serving as commentator and youth representative, **Ms. Kayun Victoria Hiraki** highlighted that peace requires intentional leadership, courage and collaboration. Describing women as architects of lasting and inclusive peace, she affirmed that the dialogue inspired young people to actively contribute to peacebuilding in their daily lives and future leadership roles.

The webinar concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session, allowing participants to explore concrete steps toward inclusive peacebuilding. Organizers and participants alike reaffirmed their commitment to translating the principles of "No Peace Without Women" into sustained action within their respective communities and nations.