

UPF Latin America and the Caribbean: Leaders in Latin America Advocate Multilateral Action

Mario Salinas
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South and Central America – A panel of leaders from South America, Central America and the Caribbean gathered in a webinar on April 24, 2026, to commemorate the United Nations International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, under the theme “Inclusion and Solidarity in Diplomacy: Peace and Development for All.”

Organized by UPF in collaboration with the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) – a project under the UPF umbrella – **Mr. Mario Salinas**, regional secretary general of UPF for Latin America and the Caribbean, moderated the event. He introduced the topic by defining three key words: multilateralism, diplomacy and ambassador.

Multilateralism: Coordinated collective action among multiple countries to solve problems that exceed the individual capacity of states, such as security, climate change, health and the economy.

Diplomacy: From the ancient Greek *diplōma*, composed of *diplo* (folded in two) and the suffix “*ma*” (object), referring to folded official documents. Originally, these “diplomas” were folded metal plates that granted privileges or served as passports in the Roman Empire.

Ambassador: From Occitan, a Romance language derived from Latin. "Ambaissador" means servant.

He described the "golden rule of diplomacy" as a fundamental principle of international interaction, based on reciprocity, mutual respect and the pursuit of peaceful solutions. In other words, "Treat other states as you would like to be treated."

The regional president of UPF, **Mr. Eliecer Araya**, welcomed participants and explained UPF's commitment to dialogue, international cooperation, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Dr. Tageldin Hamad, president of UPF-International, joined the program from the United States. "Geopolitical tensions, public distrust and institutional fatigue have narrowed the space for patient diplomacy," he said. "In this context, multilateralism is not a preference, it is a responsibility."

He described attending a public dialogue with four candidates for the next UN secretary-general, saying, "Three of them are from Latin America. One candidate has emphasized the need to rebuild public trust in multilateralism, particularly among youth, and to lead a cultural shift in how the institution communicates. She stated, 'To deliver better, we have to communicate better, and that will be a priority going forward.'"

He added, "If our work does not build trust, reduce estrangement, and serve real needs, it does not meet the moment. Multilateralism without service becomes procedural. Diplomacy without connection to communities becomes distant."

Dr. Juan Alvarez Vita, who has served as Peruvian ambassador to several countries, said that diplomats are primarily spokespeople, but also have an ethical responsibility. "Diplomats analyze the international situation, but they don't limit themselves to that; they also convey their personal opinions to their foreign ministries and, in many cases, offer suggestions and recommendations."

He continued, "Diplomacy must be based on justice, and therefore, ethics are of paramount importance and must guide diplomatic conduct." He said that a diplomat has a moral obligation to resign rather than carry out unethical instructions. "To do otherwise is to fail in the very purpose of diplomacy and an affront to ethics that affects humanity as a whole, and therefore an affront to universal peace and individual and collective development."

The final panelist was **Dr. German Blanco Alvares**, a senator from Colombia and former president of the Colombian House of Representatives. He pointed out that, at a time marked by multiple crises, multilateralism is an essential practical tool to address global problems.

He pointed out that parliamentary diplomacy is also a fundamental tool for generating trust and building consensus in the face of global challenges. "Promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts and fraternal work among nations is a shared responsibility," he said. He also stated, "Diplomacy can no longer be limited to states; it must incorporate civil society, communities, the private sector, and social and religious actors. Including more voices is not only an ethical principle but also a condition for achieving more legitimate, sustainable, and impactful decisions that are far more effective."

Dr. Alvares praised UPF initiatives for highlighting the importance of the ethical dimension in global governance, promoting international cooperation, interfaith unity and global dialogue. He also praised the leadership of Dr. Hak Ja Han and lauded her nomination as a candidate for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize.