

UPF Latin America and Caribbean: Latin Leaders Offer Perspectives on Peace

Mario Salinas
September 29, 2026



South and Central America – In line with the commemoration of the International Day of Peace, UPF-Latin America and the Caribbean (UPF-LATAMCA) held an online forum on September 29, 2026, with the collaboration of the coordinators and national representatives of the UPF associations representing religious leaders (IAPD), academicians (IAAP), media professionals (IMAP), and artists and cultural managers (IAACP), of Peru, Honduras, Ecuador and Argentina.



The webinar was themed "Transforming the Future by Investing in Peace: For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day," with a focus on interdependence and mutual cooperation. Among the attendees were 70 special guests, including ambassadors for peace, representatives of public and private institutions, and leaders of civil society.

Mr. Mario Salinas, secretary general of UPF-LATAMCA, based in Honduras, served as the moderator. In opening the program, he reminded everyone that the United Nations General Assembly had just concluded the high-level week of its 81st session, where presidents and heads of state present their visions to the world. Concurrently, meetings take place with civil society organizations holding consultative status, such as UPF. "Although less visible to the general public, these forums are vital for contributing

proposals and perspectives that enrich the global debate," he said.

Mr. Eliecer Araya, president of UPF-LATAMCA, gave the welcoming remarks from Costa Rica. "Today, we gather in a spirit of cooperation and hope, inspired by UPF's vision of building a world of lasting peace – home to a harmonious global community grounded in interdependence, mutual prosperity and shared universal values," he said. He invited speakers and participants to share their ideas and proposals for the advancement of UPF's work in the region.



The first speaker was **Pastor Luis Orestes Sanchez**, a former Congressman and coordinator of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) in Peru. "Humanity has attempted to achieve peace relying solely on human strength, without acknowledging the transcendent," he pointed out. "As religious leaders, we know that true peace begins in the relationship with God, the source of hope and strength."

Ms. Angela Sosa Veroy, a lawyer and human rights specialist, is coordinator of the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) in Honduras. She stressed the need for coordinated peacebuilding efforts. "Peace cannot be understood exclusively as an individual responsibility," she said. "We need cooperation. We need responsible governments, solid institutions, civil society organizations, churches, universities, businesses, families, and citizens working together."

Mr. Fausto Segovia Baus, a journalist and former minister of education and culture in Ecuador, is coordinator for the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) in that country. He focused on what it means to "invest in peace," saying, "From a linguistic standpoint, to invest means to change, modify or substitute one position for another. In this forum, investing in peace cannot be understood in terms of financial profit, but rather as a service to human development. This entails addressing fundamental needs – health, nutrition, quality education and secure employment – which are key pillars established by the United Nations." He encouraged fellow UPF organizers and activists to focus efforts in these areas.

Ms. Cecilia Maria Labanca, a poet, children's author and literature teacher, is coordinator for the International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace (IAACP) in Argentina. She described the healing power of poetry and literature, and shared two vivid experiences in which, through the power of literature, she was able to save two teenagers from self-destruction. She also presented two beautiful poems of her own.

Each panelist contributed their expertise in their specialized field and shed considerable light on how to win the quest for peace. A number of substantial proposals were put forth for consideration by UPF and its associations in the region, and follow-up plans were made. Overall, it was a productive and inspiring meeting.