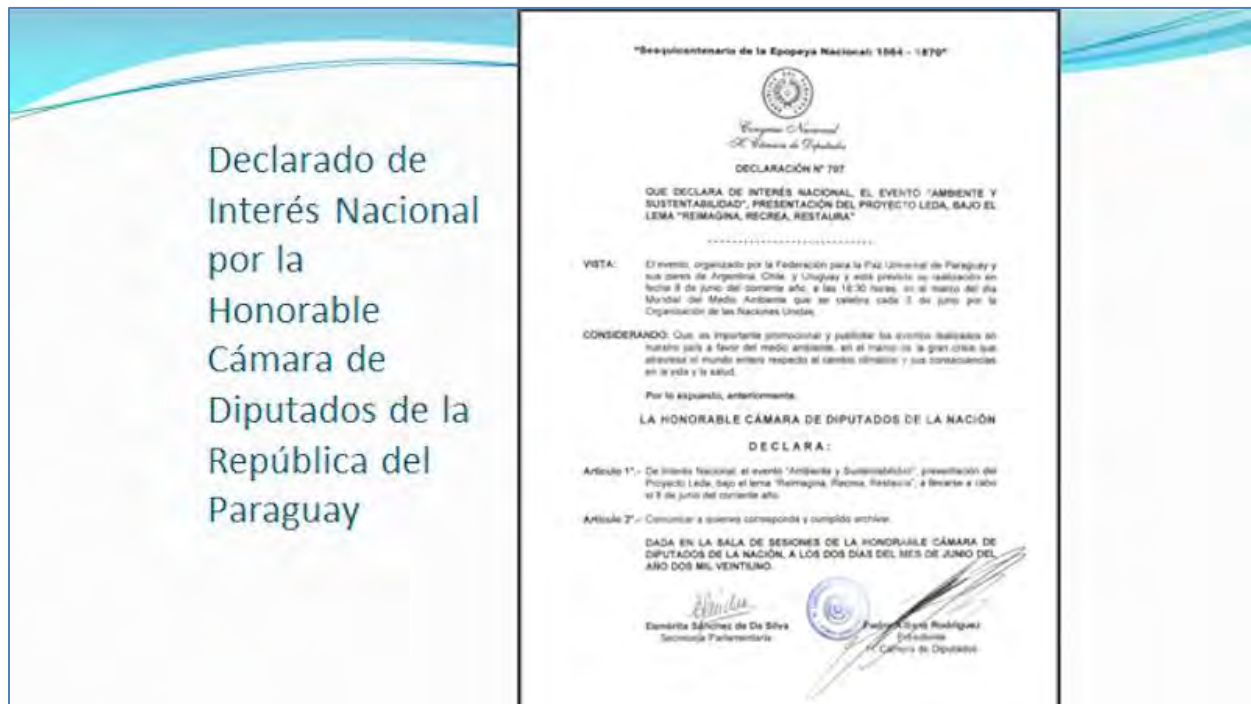


UPF-Latin America Introduces The Leda Project on World Environment Day

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South America -- "Environment and Sustainability" was the title of the Leda Project presentation in an online meeting organized by UPF-Latin America (Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile) on June 8, 2021. The meeting was declared of National Interest by Paraguay's Chamber of Deputies and was held on World Environment Day, which has as its 2021 theme: "*Reimagine, Recreate, Restore*" (1). The meeting was held on Zoom and broadcasted on YouTube, currently with more than 250 views.

For the occasion, there was a panel of specialists from different countries of the region. The meeting opened with a welcoming message from **Sung Jong Seo**, director of Southern Cone Sub-Region, UPF-South America, who thanked the speakers and participants, and mentioned UPF Co-Founder **Hak Ja Han**'s concern about the environmental issue. We also shared the documentary, "*The Hope of South America, the Pantanal Project*," which describes the vision of the UPF Founders and the progress of this initiative, located in Paraguay's far north, which promotes economic and social development and tourism in balance with the natural environment (3).



The main speaker was **Michihito Sano**, co-president of Fundación para el Desarrollo Sustentable para las Américas del Norte y Sur (Foundation for the Sustainable Development of North and South America), who introduced and showed photos of the Leda Project, which is developing more than 80 thousand hectares located approximately 850 kilometers from Asunción through a waterway on the Paraguay River.

Since 1999, a group of Japanese and local missionaries and specialists have worked there, inspired and empowered by **Sun Myung Moon**. They were pioneers in a desolate place, where there was no drinking water or electricity. Today, after more than 20 years, they have these vital elements along with facilities for more than 100 guests, a large meeting room for 200 people and a semi-Olympic pool. This is a place where they have focused on agricultural development, livestock improvement, fish farming and the raising of pigs in pastures instead of being confined. They also work on flora and fauna conservation, and the farming of pacu, saltwater shrimp and taro to increase food resources. They include educational and service programs to integrate communities with volunteer groups from Japan, the United States and other countries, who have helped repair and build school buildings.



Three specialists from different countries gave presentations:

Nancy García Molina (Argentina), professor of Biological Sciences, lecturer on environmental issues and founding member of the AVES Foundation (Environment, Life, Education and Sustainability), urged the audience to join and support positive environmental organizations for the creation of healthy ecosystems.

Carol Aviaga, national senator of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay 2015-2020 and 2020-2025, former president of the Environment Commission of the National Senate and activist for Environmental Rights, reminded us that World Environment Day is everyone's day, because we are all part of the environment. She claimed that it is time to proceed with the creation of healthier, more sustainable environments, for which she seeks to strengthen government bodies related to the matter.



Constanza Prats, director of the Women Economic Forum in Chile, who is committed to educating

companies about environmental awareness, emphasized that women are traditionally the protectors of natural resources in communities, taking on a fundamental role in sustainable development. That is why it is auspicious that women are empowered in decision making related to environmental and economic matters.

At the end of the presentations, **Luis Alberto Larre Del Puerto**, national deputy of the Republic of Paraguay 2013-2018, commented that he was grateful for being part of the important activity of cultivating pacu in Puerto Leda. **Esmerita Sánchez**, national deputy of the Republic of Paraguay who was instrumental in having the "Environment and Sustainability" meeting declared of interest at the Parliament, congratulated the speakers and organizers. She encouraged them to keep developing this type of initiatives to raise awareness of the need for real contributions for the protection of the environment.

During the meeting, a video on the juvenile fish in the Paraguay River was shown in which the former president of Paraguay, **Federico Franco**, and national deputies were pictured (4). At the end, **Miguel Werner**, president of UPF-Argentina, thanked the directors, speakers and participants, highlighting the Leda Project as a model of development in harmony with the environment.

The meeting was moderated by the director of education for the Southern Cone chapter of FFWPU, **Gustavo Giuliano**, and his wife, **Rosi Dueck**, vice president of WFWP in Latin America.

Quotes:

1) World Environment Day:

www.un.org/es/observances/environment-day

2) Recording of the "Environment and Sustainability" meeting:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ityY3PjVQfs

3) Documentary "The Hope of South America, the Pantanal Project:"

youtu.be/YajF3US7CXM

4) Production of juvenile pacu fish in Paraguay River:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3byF5MPh6a4