

Mayors and Leaders Plant an Olive Tree for Peace in Puerto Yeruá, Argentina

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Puerto Yeruá, Argentina—A group of mayors and religious representatives planted an olive tree for peace at a special event co-organized by UPF-Argentina and Red Cooperar, a civil society network.

Also at the event, which took place on April 30, 2017 in Puerto Yeruá, a town in Concordia department in Entre Ríos province, local government officials signed UPF-Argentina's [“Commitment to Solidarity and Peace” statement](#) and nonprofit members of Red Cooperar donated medical equipment and medicines for local health centers.

A day before, on April 29, Red Cooperar, in partnership with members of its network and UPF-Argentina, held five panel discussions featuring local government and civil society leaders.

Planting an Olive Tree for Peace

The event on April 30 was held at Puerto Yeruá's main park and opened with welcome remarks by Mr. Alejandro Cevey, mayor of the town. Mr. Cevey spoke about the interfaith and intercultural meeting UPF-Argentina and Red Cooperar organized on July 12, 2016 in celebration of Argentina's [Bicentennial](#) at which he asked an olive tree be planted in Puerto Yeruá. On this day his request was granted.

Mrs. Ukaivbera Gladys Do Nascimento, representing the I'Tu community in the Charrúa town-nation in Entre Ríos province, and Mrs. Ayelén Paiz, a coordinator of the Charrúas communities in Entre Ríos, commenced the watering of the olive tree. In addition, Mrs. Do Nascimento emphasized the need to rebuild our relationship with Mother Nature. Afterwards, invocations were given by representatives of the Buddhist and Hindu faiths: the Venerable Senpo Oshiro, a monk who directs the Soto Zen Buddhism Association in Argentina, and Ms. Norma Terzo, director of the Ramakrishna Ashrama in Argentina, respectively.

Then prayers were offered by Ms. Faiza Yahia, from the Al Ahmad Mosque in Buenos Aires, representing the Muslim faith, and Rabbi Israel Soriano, from Jabad Lubavitch Argentina and the Israelite Union Association of Concordia, representing the Jewish faith.

Next, Mrs. Alba Rosa Contardo, pastor of the World Summit of Miracles Ministry, representing the evangelical Christian faith, and leaders of the churches Jesús Te Ama, Ríos de Vida and Catedral de Milagros, watered the olive tree. The watering was completed by Mr. Pedro Todone, vicar of the San

Isidro Labrador Parish of Puerto Yeruá, Diocese of Concordia, representing the Catholic faith. He talked about the importance of reestablishing bonds with the creation, with our neighbors and with the Creator.

Afterwards, Mr. Carlos González, secretary of culture of Puerto Yeruá, invited the mayors Mr. Julio Almada (Colonia Ayuí municipality), Mr. Nicolás Passarello (La Criolla municipality), Mr. Daniel Lladós (Estancia Grande municipality), and Mr. Alejandro Cevey (Puerto Yeruá municipality) to the stage area. He also invited Mrs. Bernardita Zalisñak, director of preventive management and promotion of Concordia municipality, representing mayor Mr. Enrique Cresto; Mrs. María Cristina Petelín, vice mayor of Los Charrúas municipality; and Mr. Jorge Irigoyen, president of the Governing Board of Nueva Escocia.

The government and religious representatives walked together to the place where the olive tree was going to be planted in the park, in front of the San Isidro Labrador Church. The group was guided by Mr. Christian Oreb, general coordinator of Red Cooperar, and Mr. Miguel Werner, secretary general of UPF-Argentina, who carried the plant in their hands. Once the tree was planted, everyone formed a circle around the plant and each representative threw a pile of soil from a shovel or with their own hands, symbolizing their commitment to peace.

Commitment Solidarity and Peace

Once everyone came back to the stage, the local government officials were asked to sign the [“Commitment to Solidarity and Peace” statement](#) after Mr. Pablo Olivera Da Silva of Red Cooperar read its ten sections. Each person who signed the statement was given a copy of it. The statement is expected to be exhibited in a public place as a reminder of this event.

Afterwards, Mr. Oreb invited the directors and representatives(*) of different members of Red Cooperar to donate medical equipment and medicines for health centers in the municipalities of Concordia, Puerto Yeruá, Estancia Grande, La Criolla, Colonia Ayuí and Los Charrúas, as well as to the Governing Board of Nueva Escocia.

Also during the program, messages from Mr. Gustavo Bordet, governor of Entre Ríos province, and the municipality of Puerto Yeruá, were read, and dances were performed by two dance groups, Raíces de Mi Pueblo and El Triunfo.

(*) These people included Mr. Pablo Olivera Da Silva of Construyendo Ciudadanía; Mr. Rafael Colaso of AAFM; Mrs. Olga Noman of Cruzada Jujeña de Solidaridad; Mr. Enrique Micheli of Sin Diferencias; Mrs. Alejandra Durán of Psyche Terapias Integradoras; Mr. Martín Oliva of Grupo Murguera Impresentables de Flores; and Mr. Maximiliano Sereni of the Antonio Devoto cultural center. Mr. Federico Cuesta of the Asociación de Cooperadores Escolares (Adecoop 17); Mr. Carlos Rosenffel of the Argentinian Association of Adapted Tennis (AATA); Mr. Martín Scoccimarro of the Almas Doradas Foundation; Mrs. Patricia Blanco of the Caminos Fundación Revivir Adictos a la Vida; Mrs. María Cristina Recasens of the Vértices Foundation; Mr. Orlando Grelle of Primera Argentina por la Escuela Pública y la Calidad Educativa; and Mr. Diego Minutti of the Asociación Ayuda Vecinos de la Boca—as well as Mrs. Rosetta Conti, president of the Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP)-Argentina, Mr. Andres Melgarejo and Mr. Juan Maffioli of UPF-Argentina’s Peace Council—were also invited to contribute a donation.

