

## IAFLP / UPF Central America's *Finding Solutions to Society's Problems* Webinar

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**UPF-Central America** -- On November 26, 2022, a panel of women leaders from the Central America and Caribbean region met in a webinar to discuss the theme: "Finding Solutions to Society's Problems: Addressing the Inner Conflict that Exists Within Each of Us." It was sponsored by the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) which is a project of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF).

The moderator was **Mrs. Gail Adele Veith**, the regional coordinator of the IAFLP. She reminded us that UPF was founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han. Father Moon passed away in 2012, but even as Mother Moon was in deep sorrow, she said: "There is no stopping," and lovingly continued to guide and inspire this whole movement for World Peace.



**Dr. Julia Moon**, the president of the Women's Federation for World Peace International, stated in her welcoming remarks to all the participants: "Mother Moon understands the power of women to overcome traditional barriers of nationalism, politics and ethnicity. She speaks regularly about the spiritual roots of conflict and how to overcome them. She stresses that women are key to initiating peace, beginning in the family and growing outward to the neighborhood, society, nation and world. I know you will be discussing your efforts for solving social problems, and you will be learning from one another and sharing great insights." She closed by reading some statements from Mother Moon found in Volume 2 of an anthology of her words, *A Model for the Ideal Family and World Peace*.

**Dr. Ann Higgins**, president of the World Dance Council Bahamas Section and also the executive assistant to the Office of the First Lady of the Bahamas, gave congratulatory remarks, saying: "All of you

have contributed so much to society with the wealth of knowledge and experience that lies within you. All of you have solved problems in different ways and contributed to society. We congratulate you on the service you have given to society in your various capacities. We look forward to hearing how we can address the inner conflict that exists in each of us."



The first speaker was **H.E. Dame Pearllette Louisy**, a special lady who served as the Governor-General and Head of State of St. Lucia for 20 years. She was honored by Her Majesty the Queen of England with the award of Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael. She stated: "Rev. Moon was right when he advised each one of us to gain dominion over ourselves before we attempt to gain dominion over others. Before we try to right the world, we should try to right ourselves. How many times, for example, have we uttered the words, 'Let there be peace on Earth, but let it begin with me?'"

"I would like to suggest that we extend that commitment to other aspects of our common existence. Let us, first of all, acknowledge our own weaknesses and imperfections -- our own brokenness. Then let us through self-discipline, self-control, and empathy for others with similar, comparable or even heavier burdens, bring some stability to our own conflict. Then let us walk **with** each other as wayfarers on the same journey. In the words of the popular hymn, "Try a little kindness":

If you see your brother standing by the road with a heavy load from the seed he sowed, and

If you see your sister falling by the way, just stop and say, You're going the wrong way.



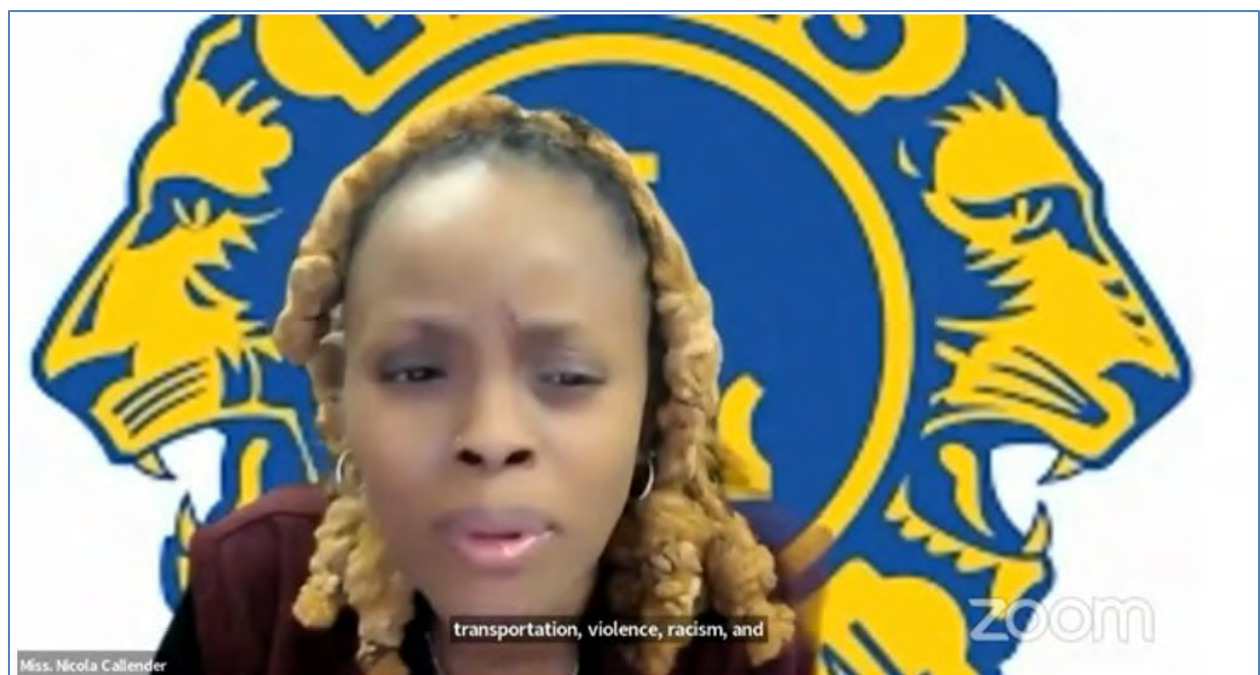
The next speaker, **H.E. Sybeline Patricia Minnis**, the former First Lady of the Bahamas and former chairwoman of the Spouses of the CARICOM Leaders Action Network (SCLAN), remarked: "Ladies, we have been asked to discuss solutions to society's problems and look at the conflict that exists within. Nations around the world may be different in heritage and culture but are faced with similar problems. In this 21st century, the challenges of hunger, poverty, conflict and war, climate change, inequitable access to healthcare and education and safety for all people continue to exist and are not unique to any given

country. In a similar manner, breakdown in the family, gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and mental health issues continue to plague our nations. Finding solutions to these issues is paramount in an effort to eliminate them and protect future generations as best as possible. Identifying and addressing the conflict within is a step in the right direction. Change can only come when it commences in each of us. We must endeavor to portray love, compassion and understanding for the persons who are marginalized and at risk in our society. It is deemed necessary that we advocate for legislation to protect such individuals but more importantly, we must work to facilitate equitable access to the services that the persons may need. It is our duty to unselfishly serve, assist and support others in our quest toward equality and safety for all people."



**Hon. Mrs. Iroshka Elvir De Nasralla**, a congresswoman and the vice president of the Congress of the Republic of Honduras, stated: "It is always important to stay informed of the most outstanding data of the events of our nation, learn them and analyze them. That will be our main strength when making a decision. Give an interview or participate in a forum. Nobody owns the truth, but there is nothing better than having good support for what we say."

"As women, we believe that we can solve every detail of life, and it is because we are more observant, suspicious and persuasive than men. Thus we must be able to identify not only one solution but also have several options since for whatever reason they reject any of the solutions that we propose."



**Miss. Nicola Callender**, a young and vibrant Barbadian woman leader who is the past president of the Lions Club of Bridgetown and chief digital technology officer, Ministry of Industry in Barbados, offered these valuable words: "Problems are part of life. We all deal with individual problems, families have family issues, and communities have community problems. Societies must come together to solve their problems, just like families. When communities try to solve problems, they start just like individuals do. They must reflect on and analyze the issue to help come to a solution. But, before discussing solutions, problems must be identified."

"Problems can arise in any part of a community and come from any aspect of community life. There's a long list of possibilities, and you probably know some of the main contenders. Can you name the leading problems in your community? Chances are you can at least start the list. Here are some from across the world: Adolescent pregnancy, access to clean drinking water, child abuse and neglect, crime and violence, domestic violence, drug use, pollution, mismanagement of resources, lack of funding for schools and services, ethnic conflict, health disparities, HIV/ AIDS, hunger, inadequate emergency services, inequality, jobs, lack of affordable housing, poverty, transportation, violence, racism, and police brutality."



The final speaker, **Mrs. Blessie Dhakal**, the international and Asia Pacific coordinator of the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), said: "It is my great honor and privilege to offer some closing remarks on this Webinar titled, "Finding Solutions to Society's Problems: Addressing the Inner Conflict that Exists within Each of Us." We have been given insight on how we might address the inner conflict that sometimes hinders us from reaching our full potential in our roles as leaders, mothers, and active citizens of society...."

"Throughout this webinar, there were commonalities among the speeches, especially on the note of addressing our inner conflict so that we can properly exercise our roles in society. At the same time, each speaker was also able to provide individual insights, moral values, and actionable steps regarding this topic. Because of this, I am deeply honored to have listened, and to have spoken in this gathering."

"I would like to thank all our esteemed speakers, the hardworking organizers, and of course, our audience for joining us today."

