

UPF International: In Memoriam: Philippines Speaker Jose C. de Venecia, Jr.

Tageldin Ibrahim Hamad
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On behalf of the founders of the Universal Peace Federation, Dr. Hak Ja Han and her late husband, Dr. Sun Myung Moon, we extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Georgina de Venecia, Hon. Christopher de Venecia, and the entire De Venecia family on the passing of Hon. Speaker Jose C. de Venecia, Jr., an extraordinary statesman of the Republic of the Philippines, who passed away on February 10, 2026.

Speaker de Venecia devoted decades of his life to distinguished public service as a diplomat, entrepreneur, legislator, five-term speaker of the House of Representatives, and global advocate for peace. Over seven terms in Congress, he demonstrated exceptional leadership, helping to shape national policy, strengthen democratic institutions, and contribute to economic reforms that uplifted millions of Filipino families.

A man of brilliance, courage, and compassion, Speaker de Venecia emerged as a pillar of democracy and a unifying force during challenging times in Philippine history. His commitment to peace transcended national borders. He founded and nurtured numerous regional associations across Asia, promoting dialogue, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

As international co-chair of UPF's International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), Speaker de Venecia played a pivotal role in advancing and expanding UPF's global vision. As a leading advocate of interfaith dialogue initiatives at the United Nations, he championed the integration of spiritual and moral principles into international peacebuilding efforts.

In 2000, the founders of UPF proposed the establishment of an interreligious council within the structure of the United Nations, an initiative designed to harmonize statesmanship and good governance with the wisdom of the world's faith traditions. Speaker de Venecia rose to this historic challenge, enlisting the support of the Philippine government to spearhead the introduction of interreligious dialogue at the United Nations. This effort culminated in the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 59/23 on December 2, 2004.

Further advancing this vision, UN Resolution 61/22 called upon the secretary-general to designate a focal unit within the Secretariat to address interreligious matters, a measure implemented in 2007. Through these milestones, the United Nations formally affirmed interfaith cooperation as an essential component of global peacebuilding, an achievement to which Speaker de Venecia made an enduring contribution.

Speaker de Venecia deeply resonated with the vision of the UPF founders, whom he respectfully described as "pillars of light with depth of understanding who see the importance of spiritual and moral development as an essential component of peacebuilding."

In the words of his wife, Congresswoman Hon. Georgina de Venecia:

"Beyond honors, titles, and institutions, Jose C. de Venecia, Jr. will be remembered for his unwavering belief in dialogue, his generosity of spirit, and his deep love for country. He lived a life anchored on service, guided by conscience, and offered without reservation..."

His legacy of principled leadership, interfaith harmony, and steadfast dedication to peace will continue to inspire generations to come.