

## UPF La Paz, Bolivia Conference: Let's End Racism. Build Peace

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**La Paz, Bolivia** -- Within the framework of support for the International Day of Peace, established by the United Nations in 1981, the Universal Peace Federation, together with the Second Vice Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies in Bolivia, held a Conference with the theme: "Let's End Racism. Build Peace." The event took place on September 22, 2022 at the Multipurpose Hall of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly in La Paz with seven parliamentarians in attendance.



There were 117 participants from different areas, among which were Dr. Betty Yañiquez, president of the Human Rights Commission of the Chamber of Deputies; Deputy Bertha Acarapi; Sabina Condori; Verónica Chalco; and Amanda Iriarte. Also in attendance were representatives of the Islamic community in Bolivia, the Catholic Church, the Civic Committee for Peace, the Ministry of Education, FEJUVE, and civil society.

The speakers included: **Ms. María Elena Pachacute**, National Deputy and president of the Commission of Nations and Peasant Native Indigenous Peoples, Culture and Interculturality of the Chamber of Deputies; **Mr. Carlos B. Mamani**, director of the Institute of Anthropological and Archaeological Research of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés and university professor; **Mr. Jorge Medina Barra**, executive director of the Afro-Bolivian Center for Comprehensive and Community Development (CADIC); **Mr. Edwin Rosas Urzagaste**, second vice president of the Chamber of Deputies; and **Nely Almanza**, general secretary, UPF-Bolivia.

Opening remarks were given by **Lic. Gustavo Mejía**, who emphasized the need to end racism in its two

aspects: acts of discrimination, and the feeling of being discriminated against for personal reasons. He advised: avoid discriminating actions and stop feeling discriminated against, emphasizing that personal maturity is expressed in the principle of respect for the other person and their individual value.

The first presentation was given by Ms. María Elena Pachacuta who stressed the need to practice respect between cultures and the importance of prior consultation by the State in relation to the exploitation of mineral wealth found in the territories of indigenous nations and peoples. Violent, confrontational societies divide and become ineffective societies in the face of the difficulties of our fellow citizens. She called for reflection on the suffering that our brothers and sisters go through under racism and discrimination and how important it is that **before being politicians we need to remember that we must be human.**

Next, Mr. Carlos Mamani stated that since long ago, we Indians, now called indigenous peoples, have been victims of discrimination, that work for peace cannot be carried out without ending it. Our indigenous ancestors were not considered human by the Spanish invaders. During Spanish colonialism, many native peoples were not considered human. Peace in Aymara is "*Moxas*," referring to sweet individual existence: a sweet home, a sweet homeland, the pleasure of living. The opposite of *Moxas* is "*Jaru*," referring to the bitter. Today we have companies that exploit the wealth of natural resources in indigenous territories without respect for the Pachamama (an "Earth Mother" goddess), and despite the fact that the Pachamama is used in political discourse. He recalled that the Aymara have not always been pacifists; however, they have a longing for a sweet, harmonious life.

To achieve peace, it is necessary to heal from anger and that is only possible with a soft heart like a cotton ball. We need to go through a process to balance feelings and develop a heart of sharing everything.

*"What does race matter, what does color matter? If we are brothers, long live love."* Martín Luther King, Jr.



Mr. Jorge Medina Barra stated that discrimination and racism have killed our peoples, because they have stereotyped us for our customs, for our color, for our way of life. They have excluded us and they have seen us as "the other." We are not others. **WE ARE HUMANS JUST LIKE YOU**, beyond the difference in skin color. Afro-descendants in the Americas have been displaced throughout the slave trade era. Black slaves told us, "They never told the truth. They brought our ancestors here to enslave them, but in Africa they were not slaves." Much has to happen for people to understand that beyond the color of our skin, we are also people and deserve the same respect. Afro-Bolivian women are three times more likely to be discriminated against: first for being a woman, second for being poor and third for being black. Beyond that difference in skin color, beyond those stereotypes, beyond that hegemony that makes us believe that the whiter you are, the more accepted you will be, there are no whites. We are all mestizos. We are all human and we must respect each other. We do not only need declarations in favor of our people. We want actions, public policies and equity development to achieve the thematic axes for the decade: **Justice, Recognition, Development.** We want to make ourselves visible.

Mr. Edwin Rosas Urzagaste mentioned Article 10 of the Constitution, pointing out that Bolivia is a pacifist State that promotes a culture of peace. During the General Assembly of the United Nations, several presidents of Latin American countries such as **Hon. Gustavo Petro** from Colombia and **Hon. Nayib Bukele** from El Salvador, have expressed the need for respect and demanded that the great powers must have respect towards developing countries. Respecting small countries means that they must respect their way of governing themselves, the internal decisions made by each country in search of development. I agree with the speech given by President Luis Arce. Bolivians are peaceful, and we are going to demand

peace in all scenarios. Everything has to start from home, from work, from avoiding discrimination against our fellow men. In our country there is a lack of respect for diverse cultures and the religions that the inhabitants of our country have. We must return to the zero point and train the next generations with a zero-racism culture, so that the future leaders already have the subject of respect for others inscribed in their education, written in their conscience.

The world of peace has been longed for throughout the ages. We who are gathered here today are the ones chosen to establish that unified world of peace with our hands and the hand of God. Such a world is built upon the principles of coexistence, mutual prosperity, and shared universal values which should be applied in the fields of economy, politics, religions and culture.

The individual lives for the whole. The state must ensure the best conditions for its citizens. The family is the foundation for society and provides the vision for the global family which does not permit discrimination and racism.

The following new Ambassadors for Peace were appointed:

1. **Edwin Rosas Urzagaste**, National Deputy, Second Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies
- 2.
3. **Dr. Consuelo Torrez**, activist for the rights of children and adolescents
- 4.
5. **Jorge Medicina Barra**, executive director of the Afro-Bolivian Center for Comprehensive and Community Development (CADIC)
- 6.
7. **Dr. Frida Choque de Claros**, trainer and promoter of Women's Rights, promoter of Bolivia's Law 348: Comprehensive Law to guarantee Women a Life Free of Violence
- 8.

UPF-Cochabamba held an event, "**End Racism. Build peace,**" at the Salón Aescum on September 24, 2022.

Welcoming remarks were given by **Dr. Lucy Margoth**, Ambassador for Peace. Next, **Mr. Sergio Nuñez Ayala**, president of UPF-Cochabamba, introduced the speakers: **Pastor Luis Abad**, director of FFWPU; **Dr. Jorge Vasquez**, Cochabamba School of Parents; **Lic. Humberto Aillon**, journalist from the newspaper *El Deber*; and **Lic. Nelson Rodriguez**, pastor of Ivirgarzama, who, due to geographical distance, sent a commemorative video.

The entertainment included the recitation of a poem by **Lic. Nancy Abaroa** and a KOI dance presented by a young man from 2nd Megumi Miyasaka generation. The forum concluded by recognizing the urgent need to create a culture of peace where the areas of law, science, religion, education and the media can work together. Likewise, a proclamation was made to work with the Cochabamba Federation of Journalists and media in its different television, press and radio through conferences on Leadership and Good Governance.

Recognition was given to the previous director of UPF for his unparalleled and sacrificial work.

Copies of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's memoir, *Mother of Peace*, were given to Lic. Humberto Aillon, Lic. Y Jhoselin Cabrera, Lic. Miguel, Dr. Lucy Margoth, and Lic. Nancy Abaroa.

