

## UPF Port Vila, Vanuatu's 2-Day Oceania Leadership Conference Launches IADP

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Port Vila, Vanuatu -- The recent two-day Oceania Leadership Conference (OLC), June 20–21, 2018, was the second in two months in Vanuatu. About 70 guests attended the program in Port Vila the first day, and attendance increased to 80 guests the second day. Approximately 35 people were completely new, and most were Christian pastors. The second day of the program included an Interfaith Peace Blessing ceremony, followed by the launching of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) in Vanuatu.

In all, one former head of state (who was the founding president of the country), one former head of government, two state ministers, 32 religious leaders, and 20 traditional leaders -- along with leaders from government, civil society, women and youth -- attended these programs. Rev. Gregory Stone, the secretary general of UPF-Oceania, co-lectured as well as emceed the marriage blessing and IADP launching. Dr. Robert Kittel was the main presenter.

An opening prayer from Pastor Solomon Vanuaroro, a Presbyterian senior pastor, was followed by a welcoming address from the Honorable Minister of Internal Affairs and IAPP-Vanuatu Chair Hon. Andrew Solomon Napuat. Honorable Napuat stressed the importance of upholding traditional Melanesian values, faith in God and Christian principles as proclaimed by the founders of Vanuatu and enshrined in its constitution.

An open-minded, enthusiastic appreciation for Reverend Moon's universal Principles of Peace was prevalent throughout the OLC program, "Providing Vision and Leadership for Nation-Building and Peace." Christian leaders especially liked the explanation of the Fall. These insights were seen as essential to addressing current critical problems, namely, the lack of moral education, the need to protect young people and the urgency to teach married couples the value of a God-centered marriage.

The chief guest for the inauguration of the IAPD was the Hon. Ham Lini, currently minister of climate change and former prime minister (2004–2008). In his commemorative address, Honorable Lini upheld

the goal and vision of IAPD, an initiative under UPF, emphasizing that it has a key role to play in contributing to world peace.

IAPD, Honorable Lini pointed out, can rise above religious barriers and focus more on moral issues such as the promotion of strong family values, character-based leadership, conflict resolution and peace development. He said, "According to the UPF founders, Father and Mother Moon, world peace can be fully accomplished only when the wisdom and efforts of the world's religious leaders are combined cooperatively and respectfully with the endeavors of national political leaders. Here in Vanuatu our Christian values are deeply integrated with our political system and social culture." He went on to say, "I am glad to know that UPF maintains that any successful strategy for peace must take into account the spiritual dimension of our human identity."

Rev. Shang Seon Park, UPF-Oceania regional chairman, gave a congratulatory address. He stressed the role and significance of IAPD, congratulating the delegates for attending the IAPD inauguration in Vanuatu and offering best wishes for future endeavors. Reverend Park had spent nearly two weeks in Vanuatu to help prepare for the program.

Prior to this, Dr. Kittel gave a PowerPoint presentation showing the launching of eight IAPD chapters since November 2017. He then read the IAPD Resolution establishing the organization in Vanuatu. Guests were invited to sign on to the Declaration, proclaiming, "We affirm the unique and essential role that religions are called to play in bringing about a world of lasting peace, a world in which people of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, cultures, and worldviews live together in mutual respect, harmony and cooperation, as one family under God."

Sincere gratitude also goes to Dr. Yong Chung-sik, greater regional chairman for the Asia-Pacific region, for his earnest prayers and whole-hearted support. His encouragement and continued guidance was deeply appreciated. Finally, the Vanuatu chapter of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, under the leadership of Rev. Peter Onis, played a vital role in preparation for the program as well as staffing during the event.

