

Modern Science in Russia for Peace and Development in Yekaterinburg, Russia

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Yekaterinburg, Russia -- A conference on "Modern Science in Russia for Peace and Development" discussed the power that science has to benefit humankind.

The conference, which was held to honor World Science Day for Peace and Development, was held at the Yekaterinburg-Centralny hotel on November 12, 2016.

World Science Day, which was created by UNESCO to be observed every year on November 10, provides an opportunity to demonstrate the interconnection of science and everyday life, involving people in debates on these topics. Russian science plays an important role in the achievement of sustainable development in the period up to 2030 -- and therefore, in ensuring a sustainable future for our country.

Participants of the conference discussed approaches of modern Russian science in addressing the goals, its impact in promoting peace in the country and abroad. The conference became a platform that undoubtedly will help to bridge the gap between scientists, policymakers, and society. This moment is important for transferring the accumulated knowledge to people and contributing through the means of science diplomacy to the socio-economic and cultural development of a sustainable future and creation of a culture of peace and non-violence.

Professor Yakov Messenzhnik, the president of the International Academy for Integration of Science and Business, an Honored Worker of Science, and a laureate of national and international awards in the field of science, health, education and culture, opened the conference. In his video address, he congratulated the participants of the conference on World Science Day. Many countries have celebrated just Science Day, he said, but World Science Day is a unifying event for all.

Professor Messenzhnik noted that it is important to translate science into a productive force which will promote the continuous development of society and the state, because the ultimate goal of science is harmonization of relations. He drew the participants' attention to the fact that many famous scientists (e.g., Albert Einstein and Marie Curie) were involved in the movement of scholars. They were not concerned about their professional interests, he said, but rather how to use scientific achievements for world peace. We know by experience that when scientists take an active role in society, the results can be impressive, he said. For example, the scientists who participated in the creation of weapons of mass destruction actively opposed their use and thus were strengthening and supporting peace.

Professor Messenzhnik said that he considers Yekaterinburg as the geographical center of Eurasia -- located on the border between Europe and Asia -- and therefore the best place for the conference. This was a good place to bring together the best minds of modern Russia in celebration of World Science Day,

for the benefit of society and the state, he concluded.

The initiator and main organizer of the conference, Yevgeny Skvortsov, the head of the Ural chapter of UPF and the coordinator of the voluntary eco-tourism "Baikal Project," gave a presentation on "Universal Peace Federation Activities in the Urals: Awakening a Volunteer in Each Person." Based on the practical side of many volunteer projects, he explained that scientific knowledge reduces the time needed to complete projects and helps to avoid errors.

For example, in constructing bridges in the Baikal Project it was impossible to find books with calculations of bridges for hiking trails. They could find only a recommendation to build a bridge with logs that are 10 meters long and 1 meter thick. It was very difficult to find such trees, and it was a pity to chop them down. There must be other types of bridges that do not require bulky material and are reliable in use. So research and development are vital to socially oriented NGOs such as the Universal Peace Federation, and they should involve scientists in the implementation of their projects, he said.



A special guest of the conference was the rector of the Novosibirsk State Theatre Institute, V.I. Kuzin, Ph.D., a former minister of culture of the Novosibirsk region. He gave an interesting presentation on "Existential Richness of Human Life as a Condition for the Sustainable Development of Society." The majority of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, he said, are a discourse of solidarity or publicity, along with which there must be privacy. He proposed that a paragraph be added to the SDGs: personal self-actualization. This would be an expression of the human responsibility to oneself. "The historical experience shows that the most popular and viable theories were those that combined a public and a personal message. While developing as a person, you contribute to developing the community and invest in the society," Dr. Kuzin said.

A member of the Ural scientific community, Artem V. Ratner, a researcher at the Center for Comparative Regional Research, Institute of Economics, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Yekaterinburg, and a candidate of economic sciences, spoke on "Enhancing the Role of Russia in the Modern System of Global Economic Relations."

Backing up his speech with statistics, Dr. Ratner stated that the Russian economy, being a developing one, is in many ways ahead of the developed economies. Russia's national debt is only 14 percent of GDP (gross domestic product). The structural share of industrial enterprises is 37.5 percent, which is higher than those of other developed countries, except for China. He noted that after the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), exports to Belarus and Kazakhstan have increased five times since 1995. One of the joint developments is a gearless traction electric drive for the railway. Important is the fact that the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are home for 40 percent of the working population; they possess 30 percent of global gas reserves. Since establishment of the BRICS, a partnership strategy has developed in the financial sector, in the matters of foreign exchange reserves and export credit. Thereafter, Dr. Ratner noted, the share of Russian exports to India has increased eightfold and to China tenfold. The share of machinery, equipment and vehicles supplied by Russia abroad is 17 percent to South Africa, 50 percent to Vietnam, and 25 percent to Kazakhstan, which allows Russia to develop its own processing industry.

In conclusion, Dr. Ratner said, "By exporting services for maintenance and installation of equipment, Russia can become a supplier of high technology. Cooperation with other countries in the period of crisis and competition will help our country to effectively join the international trend of labor division."

Ekaterina Zolotova, a doctor of biological sciences and a researcher at the Botanical Garden of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Ekaterinburg, spoke on "Science and Education in the Botanical Garden of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Ural Branch."



Dr. Zolotova said that the main directions of the Botanical Garden of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Ural Branch, are researching the ecosystem, fire and pest control, and preservation of biological diversity. In the Botanical Garden there are more than 4,000 species of native and induced flora, with 2,000 species grown in greenhouses and the rest on a plot of 10 hectares (almost 25 acres). The Botanical Laboratory Department carries out studies of geography and taxonomy, tracks the quantitative dynamics and performs the cadastral valuation of flora and fauna of the Sverdlovsk region. In the region there are 650 rare objects that need investigation and protection.

Dr. Zolotova also noted that in addition to its principal activities, the Botanical Garden has an active outreach to schoolchildren and adults and organizes tours to show the amazing collection of plants.

Konstantin V. Krylov, the regional secretary general of the Eurasian chapter of UPF and editor of the Russian edition of the magazine UPF Today, spoke on "The Potential of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Promotion of Peace." He said that the movement of Ambassadors for Peace initiated by the Universal Peace Federation has three vectors of activity:

- UN reform: creation of an interreligious peace council. UPF is working with young people of different faiths in many Russian cities. These young people hold joint charitable projects, showing respect to people of different beliefs. In 2005 at the United Nations, the founder of UPF, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, presented the idea of establishing an interreligious peace council. In 2010, this initiative found support in Russia. The United Nations declared the first week of February as World Interfaith Harmony Week. UNESCO declared 2013-2020 to be the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.
- Creation of peace zones in conflict areas. Such zones already have been created in Korea and in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. UPF is continuing the ongoing projects Baltic Dialogue and Russia-Europe Dialogue, as well as the work in Russia's Caucasus region, including renewing relations with Georgia. Also advancing is the project of the tunnel under the Bering Strait, on the part of Russia and possibly -- with the coming of the new US administration -- with the support of the United States.
- Promotion of traditional family values. UPF has supported the United Nations' proclamation of the International Day of Families. In Russia these values are promoted by the Mr. and Miss University competition, Sports for Peace and other activities.

Ruslan Menirovich Karamov spoke about his project, the "Development" Youth Center for Social Adaptation (in Pershin village of the Rezhevsky District): "The goal of our project is helping children brought up in children's homes or left without parents. At the orphanage, the child cannot get enough

attention of the tutor, and this is clearly no substitute for parental love. Children get used to begging for gifts and favors and eventually grow up unprepared for life. Our center plans to carry out their adaptation, socialization and self-realization in three interrelated areas: the teaching profession, inculcating a culture, and sports training.”



Concluding his brief presentation, Mr. Karamov invited everyone to cooperate and mentioned that in the Sverdlovsk region 5,000 children live in orphanages and about 20,000 live without parents. In all of Russia there are about 500,000 such children. Mr. Karamov said the goal of his organization is to send these children in the right direction. Then a new generation will be able to change the world.

Then Anastasia Levina, head of the Tyumen region public charity movement "Give Your Child a Holiday," which is connected to the "Generation" Youth Center of Tyumen, took the floor. A volunteer with five years of experience, she said that this movement began in 2010 with projects in some orphanages. Now, having reached the all-Russia level, it is helping children with autism and training volunteers. She has invited everyone to the project "Ski Dreams," which will take place in Tyumen in 2017, and to the project "Dream Rollers." She said that now in Tyumen, the Youth Chamber of the City Duma is actively functioning. In the near future it is planning to work with the youth government of the Sverdlovsk region.

Tatiana Poluyahtova, an Ambassador for Peace, spoke about a project called "City Helps the Village," which was launched in cooperation with UPF a few years ago. "The whole four years I could not realize the project in the school of Pokrovskoe village. The ancestors of the Russian writer Dmitry Mamin-Sibiriyak (1852-1912) lived there; the village is the largest in the Sverdlovsk region. The people there, as elsewhere, are preoccupied with life's problems, and it was difficult to get through to them and somehow change the lives of the local youth. Together with the head of the Universal Peace Federation in the Urals, Yevgeny Skvortsov, we have achieved amazing results. By the efforts of volunteers we reconstructed an Orthodox church and created some playgrounds and tennis courts. Now, when I come, people say that the streets are no longer littered with syringes, as they were prior to the beginning of our work together. I'm an Orthodox Christian, and it struck me deeply that in Yevgeny's team there were people of different faiths who worked together for a common cause. I really like the term 'interfaith movement.' This is really what we need to make our country better."

At the end of the conference Ambassador for Peace certificates were awarded to several participants. After the official closing the participants stayed behind a long time for friendly discussions with each other.