

International Women's Day Albania - Women's Participation for Development

March 4, 2016



Tirana, Albania—"Women's Participation for Development" was the title of a mini-conference held to observe UN International Women's Day 2016.

The event, which was organized jointly by the Albanian chapters of UPF and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization, was held on the afternoon of March 4 in the UPF Peace Embassy in Tirana. Mrs. Lavdie Ruci, chair of the Tirana Peace Council, was the moderator.

The WFWP president, opened the meeting by reading some words of UPF and WFWP co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon on the role of women: "Naturally, then, a man and woman are not born to exist in a relationship of hostility or opposition, where they covet or attempt to mimic the characteristics and qualities of the other. ... Their relationship is originally designed to be one where all their qualities as well as possessions are shared with each other, so that both can achieve completion and perfection, and thus together become a whole greater than the sum of the parts."



Mrs. M. recalled the United Nations' work for gender equality as expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the recent achievements of the UN work, she said, is inclusion of women in

the UN peacekeeping missions. In fact, one fourth of all UN peacekeeping missions are currently led by women, including the mission in Kosovo, Albania's neighbor. The participation of women in this way has brought new skills into peacekeeping troops and helped create bridges of communication between local populations and UN troops.



Mrs. Vjollca Mecaj, a renowned lawyer who is also the executive director of the Helsinki Committee in Albania, quoted Albanian statistics that women usually achieve higher results in education, which brings up the necessity of encouraging capable women to take an active role in society. On the other hand, Mrs. Mecaj said, women should not try to become men; both sides need to cooperate harmoniously while paying attention to the family, which many young people nowadays put aside in their plans, behind career and financial success. We need to believe that women have specific qualities and skills, which only they can provide, she said, and which are very much needed in the world today.

The much appreciated presentation of Mrs. Mecaj was complemented by a lively talk by Mrs. Dorina Prethi, a young member of the WFP board. Mrs. Prethi focused on the necessity of men and women's partnership, both at work and in the family. For women to participate in society and work outside the home, they need the support of men. In order to raise men to do that, the role of mothers is indispensable. Men need to be taught to share the duty of household chores from a young age. These statements and lively interaction with the audience made the presentation very involving.

Mr. Gaqo Apostoli, a longtime Ambassador for Peace and the chair of the National Peace Council, commented on recent political developments in the Parliament, criticizing lack of respect toward female parliamentarians. Mr. Apostoli, who is known for his love of music, could not resist the request from the audience and sang an Albanian song about mothers, which brought about a festive and joyful atmosphere.

An important part of the program was the awarding of Ambassador for Peace certificates. This time the honor was bestowed on our first speaker, Mrs. Mecaj, as well as Mrs. Gardalina Boliko, a longtime WFP member and educator in the orphanage, and Ms. Kujtime Kotorri, an initiator and manager of a plastic cap recycling project, which has enabled the providing of wheelchairs to many handicapped people. WFP has actively supported this project, collecting and donating many kilograms of caps, thanks to its network of dedicated contacts.

All the new Ambassadors for Peace were very moved and happy, and promised to commit themselves to practicing the ideals of their new position.