

Prime Minister and MPs attend International Leadership Conference 2016 in Nepal

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Addressing the Critical Challenges of our Time: The Role of Government, Civil Society and Faith Based Organizations

Executive Summary:

The Prime Minister of Nepal, H.E. KP Sharma Oli, along with four cabinet ministers and 237 members of Nepal's Legislature-Parliament joined 194 international delegates from South Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania and East Asia consisting of two former presidents, seven cabinet ministers, and 65 members of parliament from 29 nations attending the 3-day International Leadership Conference in Kathmandu from July 28-31, 2016 under the theme, "Addressing the Critical Challenges of our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations." The conference was co-sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation and the Parliamentarians Peace Council Nepal. The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, Government of Nepal, hosted one session and the lunch that followed. The opening and closing sessions were broadcast live by two television stations.

Session titles included:

- Launching "Peace Road 2016"
- UPF's Founding Vision: Realizing a World of Peace
- Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Peace-building, Human Rights and Human Responsibilities
- Overcoming Extremism and Promoting the Peaceful Resolution of Conflict: The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations
- Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Media
- Addressing the Critical Challenges of our Time: Climate Change
- Making the World Better for Future Generations: International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP)



ILC Inaugural Session I:

The Prime Minister of Nepal, H.E. KP Sharma Oli, was the Chief Guest. He came along with his wife and attended the entire session. The first couple also stayed for dinner, spending altogether 4.5 hours at the ILC. Prime Minister Oli said his goal has always been “to make Nepal peaceful, prosperous and happy” and felt this conference would make a substantial contribution toward the conclusion of Nepal’s Peace Process by bringing parliamentarians from

throughout the Asia-Pacific region to Nepal to support and encourage their Nepalese counterparts to move forward with confidence. He emphasized that the way to do this was to be willing to give up self-interest. In further elaborations the Nepalese Prime Minister explained that this was an educational process which required the active support of everyone including faith-based organizations. “The common goal of all faith-based organizations should be to encourage people of a particular religion to appreciate other religions. Religious tolerance and harmony is the need of the hour,” he added.



Peace Road 2016:

The second day began with the launching of “Peace Road 2016” and was very well attended with enthusiastic support and encouragement from ILC participants as well as many Nepalese Members of Parliament. Dr. Yong Chung Sik, UPF Regional President, spoke and two parliamentarians from Nepal, one from the Nepal Family Party and another from the Nepali Congress Party gave short comments. Several lawmakers rode bicycles to show support for the vision of the International Highway proposed by the UPF Founder. The program was brief but something everyone enjoyed. It took place in the motor court of the hotel so it was convenient for all participants to join.

ILC Session II: The UPF Founder’s Vision

This session was dedicated to an exposition of essential principles that underlie UPF, i.e., Father Moon’s life motto of “living for the sake of others,” which applies to all aspects of life, including marriage, family, professional careers, etc. During the question-and-answer session following the presentations, many of the members of the audience expressed their appreciation for having the opportunity to attend the ILC and to learn about the vision and work of UPF. They were especially happy to see the principle highlighting the relationship between family-building and nation-building.



ILC Session III: Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Peace-building, Human Rights and Human Responsibilities

With a focus on human rights and human dignity this session was very inclusive, including: Maoists, democrats, women, along with representatives from small island nations and India with over 1.3 billion people. Speakers often referred to the role UPF played in Nepal’s Peace Process as well as the situation facing Nepal today. This session and the lunch that followed were hosted by the Minister of Peace and Reconstruction, Government of Nepal. The Ministry distributed a monograph to conference delegates that highlighted the background as well as unique elements of Nepal’s Peace Process.

ILC Session IV: Overcoming Extremism and Promoting the Peaceful Resolution of Conflict: The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations

This was a very important session and even the parliamentarians were grateful to have a session that focused on the role of religions in peace-building. The panel featured a very strong group of interfaith leaders representing Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, each offering their strong advocacy for spiritual and religious activism to work for peace and prevent all forms of violent extremism. They each called for moderation and mutual respect, stating that violence is not consistent with any religion.

Two of the panelists, Dr. Kazi Islam, a Muslim from Bangladesh, and Shivamurthy Shivacharya from India, are longtime friends of UPF, going back 30 years. They spoke proudly and boldly about the value and importance of various projects of UPF and its related organizations in the area of promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

Concurrent ILC Session IV: Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of the Media in Building a Peaceful World

This was a very impressive session, well attended, with very good speakers who are prominent media professionals. It was important to have a media component built into the ILC program. This session was co-sponsored by the Nepal Republic Media house and the Segye Ilbo national daily newspaper of Korea. It dealt with the interplay between press freedom, social responsibility, and the need for guiding ethics (equally needed in sports, business, education, politics, etc.). The concept of developing personal relations among media houses so they can work together to monitor each other in order to help raise up media standards was introduced.



ILC Session V: Addressing the Critical Challenges of our Time: Climate Change

The speakers each offered very valuable content in addressing the ways in which efforts can be made to prevent further decline of the environment due to climate change, representing important perspectives from significant nations throughout Asia. One important issue was how to promote development, on the one hand, while also preserving the quality of the environment, on the other hand. President Tong, of Kiribati, came to the podium to speak extemporaneously about this issue, explaining his efforts to raise awareness about the problems that derive from climate change. He noted that, too often, corporations focus on profit more than on protecting the environment, even ignoring human survival. He encouraged all participants to go back to their respective nations and strongly encourage their governments to address the challenges of climate change and calling us to move beyond dependence on fossil fuels.

ILC Session VI: Making the World Better for Future Generations: International Association of parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP)

At the end of this session conference participants showed their support for the IAPP by signing the proposal to launch the IAPP in the Asia-Pacific region. On February 15, 2016 at the Korean National Assembly 150 current parliamentarians from over 40 nations first proposed the IAPP. That gathering featured keynote remarks from Dr. Sun Jin Moon, the Chair of UPF International, along with the Korean Assembly Speaker, Rt. Hon. Kim Eul-dong. Throughout the remainder of this year the Universal Peace Federation will hold a series of conferences to launch the Africa, South America and Europe. A global debut of this worldwide parliamentarians' association is planned for Washington D.C., USA, at the end of the year. The speakers in this session wholeheartedly supported this initiative.



Participants were eager to sign the proposal for establishing the IAPP

Closing Session:

Appreciation for the vision and global foundation of UPF was unanimous. Many of the problems today are beyond national borders. Obviously and urgently, therefore, an international response is needed. The conference theme was referred to numerous times, namely, that the interaction of government, civil society and faith-based organizations was absolutely needed to address issues like: terrorism, climate change, family fragmentation, youth problems, etc. Clearly we all need to work together to address the critical issues of our time.

At the conclusion of this ILC, 20 Ambassadors for Peace (AFP) were appointed.



The Little Angels of Korea:

The Little Angles Children Folk Ballet of Korea were welcomed in Nepal by 3,200 students from 68 schools and colleges in the capital. In addition to their four breath-taking performances for ILC

participants, the Little Angels made two VVIP courtesy calls:

1) On the Prime Minister and First Lady of Nepal, H.E. and Madam KP Sharma Oli, at the Prime Minister's Official Residence, and 2) On the President and Vice-President of Nepal, H.E. Bidhya Devi Bhandari and H.E. Nanda Kishor Pun (respectively) at the President's House.

After the conclusion of the ILC, the Little Angels gave a full 2-hour performance dedicated to Nepalese school children. It was in gratitude for the warm and friendly welcome given to the Little Angels upon arrival in Nepal. There were 800 students from 53 schools and colleges along with 500 teachers, AFP, and their families in the audience. Just prior to the performance, Nepalese students, their parents and staff made a pledge of purity for the sake of their nation, called "Pure Love Nepal." The hall was overflowing with enthusiastic students; they even sat in the aisles. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Women, Children and Welfare, Rt. Hon. C.P. Mainali, was the Chief Guest.