

Amb. Mario de Leon Jr.: Strong Messaging, Local UN Liaisons for 2026

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Amb. Mario de Leon, Jr., a retired career diplomat, recommends that WFWPI come up with clear messaging for its core programs and a liaison officer per country chapter

New York - Philippine Ambassador Mario de Leon Jr. encouraged leaders of the Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) to continue to push for strong messaging in the areas of peace, gender equality, and development in the coming years during its 2025 Year-end Report online forum on December 29, 2025.

He emphasized, for instance, the need for a sustained effort of documenting and sharing groundwork experiences as impactful stories of best practices. He also suggested that the 128 chapters of WFWPI set up a UN liaison desk to operate the lofty goals of the UN on the ground.

De Leon, a retired career diplomat, offers a rich experience in diplomacy for 40 years, having served at the UN NY through the Philippine Permanent Mission and in the

consulates and embassies in South Africa, UK, Ireland, Asia, and the US. He is WFWPI's senior adviser for diplomacy and UN Representative for New York.



Merly Barlaan, WFWPI UN Relations director and vice president for administration: It's been a busy,

impactful year

De Leon said that the UN, now beset with financial problems of its own, needs civil society groups more than ever to accomplish its goals set for 2030.

He lauded civil society for being the agenda setter for global peace and development, the bridge for peoples, government, academe, and private sectors, and the voice seeking government accountability.



The speakers during the 2025 Year-end Report forum

WFWPI, as a global women's organization, is not just simply working on partnerships, but stewardship of the common goals of peace and development, de Leon commended.

The WFWPI UN Relations Offices is headed by director [Merly Barrete Barlaan](#) who also serves as Vice President for Administration. The Geneva Relations Office is headed by Carolyn Handschin while the Vienna Office by director Maria Riehl and UN Representative [Renate Amesbauer](#).

The Annual Report forum was attended by 70 WFWP leaders from various international chapters.

WFWP envisions a peaceful and harmonious global family, and continues to focus on Peace Building, Education for Women Empowerment, Environment and Climate Action, and Humanitarian efforts among its 128 member organizations (a total of 128 countries) around the world.

It has institutionalized the celebration of International Women's Day, International Day of Peace, 16 Days of Activism on Domestic Violence, and Human Rights Day among members.