

## UPF, UN National Tour in Sri Lanka Promotes the SDGs

Chung Sik Yong  
December 13, 2015



Colombo, Sri Lanka—UPF in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre in Colombo (UNIC Colombo) conducted a nine-province national tour in Sri Lanka from December 4 to 13, 2015 to raise awareness of and inspire youth to work together to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UN team was led by Mrs. Hiranthi Gunawardena, officer-in-charge of UNIC, Colombo. The UPF team was led by Dr. Chung Sik Yong, chair of UPF-Asia. Together, they traveled to every province in the beautiful island nation.

UPF's presentations focused on peace and sustainable development at the micro level focusing on the family. This was complemented by the UN presentations that highlighted implementing the 17 SDGs at the community and national levels.



The tour had the support of the government of Sri Lanka at the highest levels. The President of Sri Lanka, H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, met with the UN and UPF teams during the tour and reiterated his government's support for the SDGs, as well as recognized the efforts of both the UN and UPF in promoting peace and empowering youth. The two delegations also met with Sri Lanka's minister of public administration, Mr. Ranjith Madduma Bandara, and the speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, Mr. Karu Jayasuriya.

In addition, former Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Hon. D.M. Jayarathne, cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, chief ministers, and members of parliament, both at the national and local levels, attended and supported programs in every city.

Equally important, religious leaders, educators, and leaders of civil society also participated. Perhaps most significantly, nearly 3,000 youth leaders covering all nine venues attended these presentations.

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## **UN Information Centre Colombo Statement on SDG National Tour in Sri Lanka**

**Hiranthi Gunawardena**

**December 23, 2015**

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Colombo is pleased to be associated with the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), which has ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) status with and supports the United Nations and its initiatives and actions.

UNIC has had the privilege of working together with UPF to organize celebrations of International Days of Peace in Sri Lanka in the past. Taking this bond further, just after the announcement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN in September 2015, UNIC partnered with UPF-Sri Lanka to organize a national tour to take the message of the SDGs and the importance of peace in achieving the goals across the country through awareness programs, from December 4-13, 2015.

This joint venture we just concluded was meant to empower youth through peace education and capacity building for leadership required to achieve the SDGs. It reinforced UNIC's actions of promoting the SDGs in the country and to make even greater strides towards a peaceful and sustainable future.

The participation of senior officials of UPF-Asia, Dr. Chong Sik Yong, regional president; Dr. Robert S. Kittel, director of education, and Mr. Edgar Tanate, throughout the program increased the value of it. Their commitment, dedication and sincere interest were amazing and encouraging. They could win the hearts of Sri Lankan youth through their effective speeches and presentations, which stimulated young minds and hearts to deal with the tremendous task ahead to protect our planet.

These awareness programs were attended by peoples' representatives, and drew their attention to issues of national interest, as well as paved the way to meet and discuss the way forward with the Hon. speaker of the parliament of Sri Lanka, Mr. Karu Jayasuriya, and His Excellency, the President, Mr. Maithreepala Sirisena, marking the highest assurance of actions towards achieving peace and sustainable development in Sri Lanka.

Very special mention has to be made on the outstanding contribution of the secretary general of UPF-Sri Lanka, Dr. Chula Senaratne, who was the live-wire of the whole process. UNIC Colombo extends its sincere thanks to UPF for selecting UNIC for this collaboration, creating a win-win scenario, which proved to be a great success, and we wish UPF every success in its good work!

We look forward to working together with UPF for a better world for our future generation.

Hiranthi Gunawardena  
UNIC Colombo

