

## Central American and the Caribbean Dignitaries attended UPF's ILC Costa Rica

Gerardo Brenes  
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**San José, Costa Rica** -- The vice president of Costa Rica and dignitaries from Central America and the Caribbean attended the UPF International Leadership Conference (ILC) in Costa Rica.

Among the 130 guests attending the ILC and the launching of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) were a total of 78 parliamentarians and government officials from the region. Costa Rican Vice President Hon. Ana Helena Chacón, attended the conference along with the president and vice president of the Legislative Assembly and the minister of foreign trade of Costa Rica.



The three-day conference took place from October 6 to 8, 2016, under the title, “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations.” UPF co-hosted the conference.

Session titles included: “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Peacebuilding, Human Rights and Human Responsibilities;” “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;” “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Climate Change;” “Strengthening Family to Build A Safe and Harmonious Society: The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations;” and “Making the World Better for Future Generations: International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP).”

### **Special Session at the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica**

The opening program took place in the main hall of the Legislative Assembly building.

Welcoming remarks were given by Hon. Antonio Alvarez Desanti, president of the Legislative Assembly

of Costa Rica. Hon. Amarilis Santana Cedano, a member of the Senate of the Dominican Republic, spoke about the ILC and UPF.

### **Opening Plenary Session: “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations”**

Speakers in this session emphasized that the way to create peace in the region is for governments, civil society and faith-based organizations to work together, find common goals and establish a common vision. A member of the Central American Parliament and members and the vice president of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica were among the speakers.

#### Speakers

Session Chair: Mr. Mario Salinas, ILC Organizing Committee

- Mr. Gerardo Brenes Alfaro, president of UPF-Costa Rica
- Dr. Charles S. Yang, chair of UPF-Latin America
- Hon. Rolando González, former member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- Hon. José Alberto Alfaro Jimenez, vice president of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- Hon. Nidia María Jiménez Vásquez, member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- Hon. Amarilis Santana Cedano de Martínez, member of the Senate of the Dominican Republic
- Hon. Nancy Elizabeth Henríquez James, member of the National Assembly of Nicaragua
- Hon. Guillermo Antonio Osorno Molina, member of the Central American Parliament
- Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, president of UPF International



### **Launching Peace Road 2016**

The second day began with the launching of Peace Road 2016 in Costa Rica, which was very well attended, with enthusiastic support and encouragement from ILC participants as well as many Central American and Caribbean members of Parliament. Dr. Kim Sang Suck, president of UPF-Central America and the Caribbean, spoke, and two parliamentarians, one from Nicaragua and another from the Dominican Republic, gave comments. Both have participated in the launching of this year's Peace Road: one in Korea and the other in the Dominican Republic, and shared their experiences taking part in and emphasized the importance of this initiative.

A simulation of the Peace Road was shown, which inspired many of the participants. Some of the attendees said they would like to hold a peace bike tour in their community once they return home.

#### Speakers

Program Chair: Mr. Víctor Castillo, ILC Organizing Committee

- Dr. Kim Sang Suck, president of UPF-Central America and the Caribbean
- Hon. Agustín Armando Jarquín Anaya, former member of the Legislative Assembly of Nicaragua
- Hon. Guadalupe Valdez, former member of the Congress of the Dominican Republic

### **Session II: UPF's Founding Vision: Realizing a World of Peace**

This session was dedicated to an exposition of essential principles that underlie UPF, i.e., Rev. Dr. Sun

Myung Moon's life motto of "living for the sake of others," which applies to all aspects of life, including marriage, family, professional careers, etc. The relationship between family-building and nation-building was emphasized. The speakers also highlighted the role of UPF in actualizing Rev. Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's vision for peace, and said they were honored to have been invited to speak at this ILC.

### Speakers

Session Chair: Mr. Mario Reniery Salinas, ILC Organizing Committee

- Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, president of UPF International
- Hon. Jorge Rodríguez Araya, member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- Hon. Amarilis Santana Cedano de Martínez, member of the Senate of the Dominican Republic
- Hon. Agustín Jarquín Anaya, former member of the National Assembly of Nicaragua
- Dr. Dawn Bacchus-Horan, president and CEO of Dawn's Designer Collection, Trinidad and Tobago

### **Session III: Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Peacebuilding, Human Rights and Human Responsibilities**

Costa Rican Vice President Hon. Ana Helena Chacón gave special remarks for this session focused on human rights and human dignity. Ms. Chacón spoke about the need to grow as one human body together. Costa Rican Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Hon. Jhon Fonseca spoke about equal distribution to bring peace and harmony to all humankind.

### Speakers

Session Chair: Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, president of UPF International

- Hon. Ana Helena Chacón, vice president of Costa Rica
- Hon. Jhon Fonseca, vice minister of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica
- Hon. Manuel Eduardo Conde, member of the Congress of Guatemala
- Hon. Pilar Porras Zúñiga, former member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- The Founder's Address was given by Mr. Kwon Jin Moon, on behalf of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon
- Hon. Daniel Gayardo, member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- Special remarks were given by Hon. Estrella Zeledon Lizano, former first lady of Costa Rica, the wife of former Costa Rican President Dr. Rodrigo Carazo Odio

### ***Declaration of Regional Parliamentarians Association for Peace Signing of the Declaration***

After Session III, parliamentarians from Costa Rica, Central America and the Caribbean signed the *Declaration of Regional Parliamentarians Association for Peace*.

### **Session IV: Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Climate Change**

This session focused on the threat of and solving climate change. Education about the threat of climate change is needed in the region. "As leaders in Central America and the Caribbean, we need to understand the effects of climate change on our nations. If we can reduce the amount of [contaminants in the environment] and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the effects will be less than if we choose to do nothing," said one speaker.

### Speakers

Session Chair: Mr. Oscar Mario Barquero Campos, ILC Organizing Committee

- Hon. Juan Ramón Jiménez, member of the National Assembly of Nicaragua
- Hon. Marco Vinicio Redondo, member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- Dr. Santiago Rivas Leclair, executive secretary of FOPREL (Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean Basin)
- Hon. Donna Elizabeth Hunte-Cox, consul general of the Consulate General of Barbados in New York
- Mr. Ovidio Rojas Quesada, oversees agricultural development programs in collaboration with the UN and USAID (the United States Agency for International Development)

### **Session V: Strengthening Family to Build a Safe and Harmonious Society: The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations**

This session focused on the role of religion and faith-based organizations in strengthening the family which, in turn, can build a safe and harmonious society.

## Speakers

Session Chair: Mr. Jorge Luis Oliveira, ILC Organizing Committee

- Hon. Guillermo Osorno Molina, member of the Central American Parliament
- Rev. Michel Anthony Steele, founder and president of Hope Transplant International, Barbados
- Dr. Charles S. Yang, chair of UPF-Latin America
- Mr. Harrypersad Maharaj, president of the International Religious Organizations, Trinidad and Tobago
- Hon. Laura Paula López, member of the Congress of Mexico
- Mr. Rafael Guevara Coto, Baha'i Community of Costa Rica



## **Session VI: Making the World Better for Future Generations: International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace**

The vice president of the National Assembly of Costa Rica and the ambassador of the Dominican Republic to Costa Rica were among the speakers in this session. The speakers highlighted the vision of Rev. Moon and Mrs. Moon for the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP). The speakers and participants agreed that this initiative is a good driving force to promote dialogue among lawmakers and other leaders in Central America and the Caribbean region.

## Speakers

Session Chair: Mrs. Maria Luisa Sol Sol, ILC Organizing Committee

- Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, president of UPF International
- Hon. Nancy Elizabeth Henríquez Jamez, member of the National Assembly of Nicaragua
- Rev. Teodulo Silfa Casso, director of Chaplains in Florida in the Dominican Republic
- Closing remarks were given by Mr. Teodoro Ursino Reyes, governor of La Romana province in the Dominican Republic
- Dr. Kim Sang Suck, president of UPF-Central America and the Caribbean
- Mr. Gerardo Brenes Alfaro, president of UPF-Costa Rica

Throughout the conference, different participants committed themselves to work continuously for world peace. The delegation from the Dominican Republic decided to draft a resolution for peace to promote peace in its nation and beyond.

At the end of the ILC, several new Ambassadors for Peace were appointed and the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica recognized UPF and its co-Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for fostering a culture of peace and promoting family values, interreligious dialogue and altruistic leadership, under the premise, “we are one global family.”