



Interreligious & International Federation for World Peace

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Inaugural Assembly: Founding the IIPC



The **Interreligious and International Peace Council (IIPC)**," said H.E. Debbie H. Remengesau, First Lady of the Republic of Palau, "can improve existing methods and practices for addressing critical global problems by being the leader in the moral or spiritual conscience in leadership governance." She further explained that the eternal values derived from religious teachings not only establish a strong moral value system for this life, but also prepare people for the eternal life in the spiritual world.

The IIPC was founded on October 3rd 2003 in New York City where 304 delegates, including 52 guests from the United Nations-all together representing 149 nations-attended the 4-day Inaugural Assembly with the theme, "Global Governance for a New Realm of Peace." The Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP), founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon, sponsored the event.

This was seen as the pinnacle of the Founder's lifelong work and undying quest for world peace. Notwithstanding his more than half century of public life, the more immediate underpinning for launching the Peace Council was laid during this past summer. IIFWP held both broad-based and grassroots programs. One-day seminars in 158 nations around the world were held during a two month period while the Federation simultaneously carried out international conferences in three strategic areas of global concern: Jerusalem, Israel; Washington DC, USA, and Seoul, Korea. In essence, both the grassroots as well as the international nature of IIFWP could be observed. But even more important, and more than just a show of strength, this demonstrated the serious investment, financial sacrifice, and unshakable commitment this organization and its Founder has to creating world peace.

At the end of this Assembly, the Hon. Sam H. Zakhem, the Former U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain concluded, "Rev. Moon has built a strong following throughout the world. He now has a great reservoir of good will that could help bring about harmony between people and friendships among nations." But, Ambassador Zakhem cautioned, "We should be planning for the next stage, namely the implementation stage. We need to reach out to our respective governments to espouse the principles of IIPC."

His advice was heeded. Within two weeks after the its inauguration, a selected number of delegates reconvened in New York City for an IIPC Consultation, a planning session lasting three days.

They will be reviewing, among other things, the "Inaugural Declaration" drafted and signed by delegates of the IIPC inauguration. The heart and spirit of the proclamation was not to point fingers or lay blame, although it did begin by calling for serious self-reflection. The purpose was to learn from shortcomings, identify areas that can be improved, and refocus on the vital task of establishing models of good governance. The declaration began:

"Whereas, we are going through a most critical time in history that requires each of us to re-examine both ourselves and our institutions of global governance, including the United Nations, and to search for ways and means to go beyond past achievements in a renewed effort to prevent the suffering and despair caused by inhumane violence and to alleviate poverty that affects the lives of hundreds of millions of our fellow human beings around the world..."

It also called "upon governments, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to expand their capacity to resolve conflict, by integrating interreligious and intercultural dimensions in their projects and programs."

The fact that the United Nations was specifically named in the resolution was understandable. Just 12 days before the conference began, on September 19th 2003, the *New York Times* ran a front page article titled *"U.N. Senses It Must Change, Fast."* In it, Secretary General Kofi Annan was quoted calling for "radical" revisions in the U.N. in order for this international body to survive.

The Chairman of the IIFWP, Rev. Dr. Chung Hwan Kwak, in his Keynote Address highlighted the role religion plays in social change and development, explaining why it must be a partner in the governing process:

"Ultimately, it is not technological transformation alone that will lead us to peace. Spiritual development is also necessary. In this respect, the role of religion is critical, for human beings are shaped by religion in profound and important ways. Moreover, throughout history religion has frequently been a primary agent of significant moral and social transformation. Thus, we should not ignore the core principles taught by all religions."

Roundtable discussions were held in the afternoon on October 2nd 2003. Among the topics delegates could attend were:

- Human Development
- The Quartet, the Road Map and Peace in the Middle East
- Civil Society and the Creation of an Ethical and Caring Global Community
- Continental and Regional Alliances in a Global Age
- The Major Powers and the Korean Peninsula
- America: Challenges Facing the World's Sole Superpower
- Addressing Critical Issues Facing Africa



During the morning session on October 3rd 2003, the Founder of IIFWP addressed the delegates and day-guests totaling 1,200 people. The Founder's Address, which Rev. Moon called his "gift" to the Assembly, dealt with the topic, *The New Elimination of Boundaries and World Peace*. He said that people have to overcome self-imposed barriers of race, religion and culture and that there are three things each person has to know for certainty: the existence of God, the existence of the spiritual world, and the practice of "true love for the sake of others." This level of oneness of heart creates the unbreakable "link in the lineage between parent and child." Once you reach this level of maturity and spirituality, you are ultimately qualified to refer to God as your "Father," not by faith alone but now aided with unquestionable, experiential convictions as well.

Following the Inaugural Session and lunch, participants attended the "Peace Under One God" rally. This was held at the Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, just opposite the United Nations. But it was not a protest! It was a rally of support for the august world body. On a cool autumn day, with a jumbotron behind the stage and 10,000 men, women and children gathered to support new and innovative approaches to global governance, the program outlined four steps to world peace:

1. Living for the sake of others
2. Building families of true love
3. Interreligious reconciliation and cooperation, and
4. The proper role and function of the United Nations

Media coverage, electronic and print, drew more than 20 newsmen and women from nine nations. United Press International quoted H.E. Abdurrahman Wahid, former president of Indonesia as saying, "The idea of establishing the IIPC is an excellent idea."

INAUGURAL DECLARATION

Whereas, we are going through a most critical time in history that requires each of us to re-examine both ourselves and our institutions of global governance, including the United Nations, and to search for ways and means to go beyond past achievements in a renewed effort to prevent the suffering and despair caused by inhumane violence and to alleviate poverty that affects the lives of hundreds of millions of our fellow human beings around the world; and,

Whereas, we realize that conscientious and enduring efforts by international organizations and nation states to resolve critical global problems through political, economic or military mechanisms developed during the twentieth century, but which have met with only partial success; and,

Whereas, we are aware of the profound significance of religion and spiritual practices in shaping the thoughts, words and deeds of billions of people worldwide; and,

Whereas, we recognize that at critical junctures in human history it is the inspired commitment and efforts of courageous and principled men and women, which make the difference between hope and despair, and between life and death for millions of people; and,

Whereas, at this point in time, history calls for bold, far-sighted and wise governance grounded in interreligious and international cooperation that fully addresses the root causes of violence, armed conflict, poverty, HIV/AIDS and other health issues, environmental degradation, illiteracy, population displacement and more; and,

Whereas, we are committed to developing an exemplary international organization that draws upon the experience, wisdom and service of people from diverse racial, religious, national, educational, economic and cultural backgrounds, to realize our universal aspirations for peace, and international cooperation; and,

Whereas, we are dedicated to moving beyond the prevalent practice of acting on sectarian or national self-interest, and to embracing the highest spiritual and moral principles for the sake of peace and the overall well being of humanity; and,

Whereas, the Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon's universal vision of peace, rooted in interreligious harmony and global cooperation, challenges each of us to practice the highest standards of unselfish leadership so that we may offer hope to humanity and honor to God,

We therefore:

1. Decide to commit ourselves to establish the Interreligious and International Peace Council as a global instrument to promote peace;
2. Call upon governments, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to expand their capacity to resolve conflict, by integrating interreligious and intercultural dimensions in their projects and programs;
3. Requests international and regional organizations to strengthen their support for the efforts of civil society and non-governmental organizations to address the root causes of conflict and to promote peace;
4. Urge people of all nations to recognize that the foundations of world peace are rooted in:
 - Recognition of God, as the ultimate reality, our common origin, and the source of true love and goodness;
 - Knowledge that the entire cosmos and human beings are not only physical, but fundamentally spiritual in nature;
 - Practicing the principle of living for the sake of others;
 - Overcoming all barriers of race, religion, nationality, to become one worldwide family under God;
 - Fostering interreligious and international respect, harmony, and cooperation.
 - Promoting moderation, tolerance and empathy in the context of an "ethic of human solidarity."
5. Further decide to support the IIPC as it strives to fulfill its timely mission, of providing vision, leadership and solutions to critical global problems.

Signed on this day, October 3, 2003, in New York City,

at the Inaugural Assembly of the Interreligious and International Peace Council.