SPECIAL REPORT
United Nations
International Day of Peace
September 21, 2009
Celebrations in more than 40 nations
Organized by Universal Peace Federation

UPF in Collaboration with UN, Government Agencies and NGOs in 40 Nations
United Nations International Day of Peace

**WORLDWIDE:** The International Day of Peace is a United Nations observance held on September 21st each year to call for peace. This year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon called for an international focus on the topic of nuclear disarmament. In response, UPF chapters around the world held a series of programs to mark the day. Disarmament seminars and rallies took place in ten nations, including at the UN headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. In 40 additional nations, Day of Peace events addressed local peace issues.

**Geneva, Switzerland:**

UPF in joint sponsorship with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the UN in Geneva, and the Geneva Interfaith Intercultural Alliance organized an important seminar on disarmament at the United Nations in Geneva. It brought together government, UN and NGO experts in the field of disarmament with the Model UN Interreligious Youth Council of GIIA, including nearly 70 students from Lausanne and Geneva universities.

The keynote opening speech was given by H.E. Amb. Dian Triansyah Djani, former President of the Trade and Development Board of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, current Vice President of the Human Rights Council (2009-2010), and candidate for Chairman of the Conference on Disarmament, the UN’s sole disarmament negotiating body that is located in Geneva.

**London, England:**

Professor Bhupendra Jasani spoke about the importance of independent verification in disarmament negotiations, and testified about the work of the European Satellite Centre for arms control and confidence monitoring and crisis management. “If there is to be real confidence in the disarmament process, it must start based on accurate information and understanding,” Jasani said. He demonstrated the techniques used to distinguish between a nuclear power station used for energy purposes and one used for enriching plutonium for a nuclear bomb.
Vijay Mehta, Chair of World Disarmament Campaign and Action for UN Renewal, spoke on the potential for partnership between the United Nations and civil society to promote a world free of nuclear weapons. Moeen Yaseen, founder of Global Vision 2000, an international Islamic think tank, spoke on “The Military Influence on our Global Economy and the Need for a Paradigm Shift.”

Delhi, India.

Ms. Shalini Dewan, Director of United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan, spoke on “Peace and Non-Violence” at a large celebration at the UN Conference Hall. The event also included interfaith prayers and a symbolic “surrender of weapons” by students of the local Springdales School. Ambassador K.V. Rajan, President of the Association of Indian Diplomats, spoke on the “Vision of a World Without Weapons,” and Dr. Mohini Giri spoke of the role of women in peace making. The guest of honor was the Hon. Salman Khurshid, Minister of Minority Affairs in the Indian government.

Kinshasa, DR Congo:

In one of the most troubled nations in Africa, political and religious leaders gathered to call for a national end to violence. Following the readings of the UN and UPF Peace Resolutions, UPF-Congo Secretary General Michel Futila di Mayeko gave a thought-provoking presentation on the topic of the “Cause and Resolution of Conflict.” The event was broadcast on Radio TV Lisanga and Canal Congo TV and covered by two press organizations, the Agence Congolaise de Presse and Rédéférence Plus.
Dublin, Ireland:
Ian White, Director of the International and Political Programme and former CEO of the Glencree Peace and Reconciliation Centre, an institution that has been deeply involved in facilitating the process of peacemaking in Northern Ireland, pointed out the key issues that led to the 1998 Good Friday agreement and eventual halt to the violence in Northern Ireland. Among the issues he covered was the importance of getting leaders of the extremes to the peace discussions. Without dealing with the extreme elements in any conflict, it is virtually impossible to ensure long-term peace.

Buenos Aires, Argentina:
Building off the preamble of the UNESCO Constitution, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed," the program in Argentina focused on the ways in which individuals and institutions could “disarm” themselves. One highlight of the event was the Day of Peace Poetry Contest, won by Concepcion Rodriguez Garaventa with her poem “Everyone,” which challenged all to feel the “fire of life, fire of love, and fire of peace.”

A full report of all Day of Peace events is online at http://www.upf.org/international-day-of-peace-2009