

International Day of Peace Celebration in Pakistan

Climate Action for Peace

Peace Center Lahore and United Religions Initiative Pakistan organized an event to celebrate International Day of Peace with the set theme given by the United Nations “**Climate Action for Peace**” at Peace Center in Lahore, on 21st September, 2019.

Fr. James Channan OP Director Peace Center and Regional Coordinator URI Asia- Pakistan invited many honorable guests from different cities of Pakistan and Kashmir. Fr. Younis Shahzad OP, Vice Provincial, Dominican Order, Pakistan, presided. There were many distinguished guests: Maulana Zubair Abid, Chairman Interfaith Peace & Harmony Network Pakistan; Fr. Patrick Peter OP, Student Master, Ibn-e-Mariam House of Philosophy; Dr Kanwal Feroze, writer and poet; Mr. Sohail Ahmad Raza, Director Interfaith Department at Minhaj University; Dr. Munawar Chand, Chairman Krishna Mandir and Hindu Leader; Mr. Osman from Sudan, interfaith promoter; Saeed-ur-Rehman Saddiqi from Azad Kashmir, and Ahmad Hussain, URI Cooperation Circle (CC) Coordinators from Islamabad, and many others from Faisalabad and Multan, as well as from Lahore.



The program started with planting a tree in the garden of the Peace Center, and later on interfaith prayers offered for the world peace and protection of our Mother Earth through protecting our environment.

After prayers, Sr. Sabina Rifat, URI Women Coordinator, formally and warmly welcomed all the



honorable guests for joining the celebration. All eminent guests were requested to come forward for beaming the Peace Candle, which glowed throughout our program. Mr. Faisal Ilyas, Executive Secretary, Peace Center, Lahore showed the very famous Earth Song by Michael Jackson: “What about sunrise, what about rain...” a famous Earth Song, giving a message to save our habitat/nature all around. The video created a great impact to realize the destruction made by us! Unfortunately, root causes are cutting trees, pollution of many kinds, responsible of climate

change and making our Earth crying in pain.

Fr. Dr. James Channan OP delivered a mind changing and very inspiring speech from destructive



to constructive behavior of human beings. He said “United Nation has set the theme for this year to celebrate International Day of Peace as Climate Action for Peace; we are promoting this theme and SDGs no. 13 Climate Action and no. 16 Peace, Justice & strong institutions. I thank you for joining and supporting us to spread the message of peace towards peaceful environment. We are living in a modern age and there are many countries such as Russia, USA, Israel, Pakistan, India, France etc. having thousands of nuclear weapons which are really threatening the world peace and these can destroy the world hundreds

of times. We are the people who are promoting peace and condemning war. A moment ago you see the video message of Earth Song, which shows clearly how we are destroying our habitat; we are cutting trees, promoting war, making air so much polluted, disturbing our climate and simply destroying our environment. We are poisoning the air for our children, upcoming generations will suffer a lot rather we must save our nature, trees are giving us oxygen, a life saving gas, water is the sign of life, we are wasting it. So my dear friends, we have to take strong actions to save the world. He also said that today we will focus on one theme only and that is “Climate Action for Peace.”

Fr. Younis Shahzad OP, Vice Provincial of Dominican Order, Pakistan, presided over and in his



remarks he said “I am extremely very happy to see all the arrangements to celebrate 37th International Day of Peace with very needful theme; Climate Action for Peace. I congratulate Fr. James Channan OP and his very dedicated team to demonstrate the significant activities, speeches, video messages and especially tree planting activity. I am inviting all peace promoters to join us for building peace and I really appreciate Peace Center and URI Pakistan for the conduction of awareness raising programs. Dominicans in Pakistan are supporting the agenda, to protect environment through peaceful measures. We also encourage human values to pray and try for full cooperation; planting trees etc. I would like to advise all that we should promote love as Jesus showed rather hatred. Thank you and God bless you all.”

Secretary General United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres’s



video message was played to know the action towards better of our environment. All the participants liked and appreciated it. Miss Zara Pervaiz, URI CC Coordinator Light of Hope read the Urdu translation of the message of UN Secretary General. Dominican friars sung a beautiful song of peace to involve the audience and gave a message of peace. It was the famous song of St Francis of Assisi, “Make Me a Channel of Peace”. Mr. Sohail Ahmad Raza was invited by Mr. Asher Nazir Executive Secretary URI Pakistan to share his views by representing Minhaj University. He said, “I am very much thankful to the organizers for arranging such a meaningful event to give a

message of love and peace. We have to take very positive steps to save our environment; we are at the do or die situations, we waste water, as water is the life saving and vital part of the nature.”



Dr. Sadia Umar shared, “Being a woman, I would like to give a message to all women sitting in this hall for the celebration of International Day of Peace, I must say please do not waste water, if you can do your work with little quantity of water, prefer it always. Please plant as many trees as you can and play our full role for climate action for peace” Saeed-ur-Rehman Siddiqui from Azad Kashmir shared “Kashmir is suffering a lot since long and war is destroying plants, air and environment for the safety of all mankind. I wish and pray to have peace in Kashmir and all that areas where people are promoting war.”



Mufti Ashiq Hussain, as an interfaith promoter and Muslim religious scholar, quoted verses from Holy Quran to give a message of peace, interfaith harmony and Climate Action for Peace. Water is life and without water there will be no life on Earth.”



Allama Zubair Abid Religious Scholar also shared very relevant verse of Holy Quran that Prophet PBUH said, “Do not cut trees, even if you are in war.”



He also boosted the message of the United Nations by sharing the daily life practice of cutting trees for different purposes. Our actions and words have the great impact in our surrounding, be careful what you say and how you say?

Mr. Osman Saduldeen, URI CC Sudanese Community Pakistan from Islamabad, congratulated to Fr. James Channan OP for arranging splendid event to support the agenda of United Nations;

Climate Action for Peace, I would like to say to minimize the conflicts regarding Kashmir and other global problems destroying environment. We should say please seize the fire and promote peaceful environment all around. I support the today's agenda; I must say no water no life. 60% of the rain is produced by plants, if we gradually cut the trees, there will be no rain at all and climate will become worst for living beings on Earth.



Dr. Kanwal Feroze, poet and writer, beautifully glittered the theme of the day by sharing his poetry in a very appealing & literary way which was soaked well by the audience. He further said “Trend of cutting trees is more supported by us rather planting. It is a sad news and need to be stopped by force. There should be a law to stop them who cut the trees; life saver.



Four new CC Coordinators received their URI CC approval certificates; 1-Ms. Kiran Iqbal Coordinator for ROLE CC Multan, Pakistan, 2 - Mr. Taswar Younis Gill Coordinator for STAR CC Faisalabad, Pakistan, 3 - Naveed Hameed Coordinator for Faiz Resource Foundation Lahore, Pakistan and 4 - Mr. Osman Saduldeen Coordinator for Sudanese Community Pakistan CC. Mr. Jibran Masih Gill received a appreciation letter as a member of Islamabad CC.

Taswar Younis, URI CC Coordinator, said, “We have to promote tolerance, peace and love to support the agenda of the event, I also congratulate to the whole team for arranging and inviting us today.” He also expressed his gratitude for Mr. Asher Nazir and Sr. Sabina Rifat by presenting token of love & appreciation for their services of URI in Pakistan.

Fr. Dr. James Channan OP delivered the thank you note and one by one he showed great respect



for their valuable participation. He said “I am very thankful and appreciate all the guests who came from different cities to join us. Our unity for the bigger cause can fuel up the objectives. We should always try to be the part of solution rather creators of the problems. I also express my sincere thanks to all URI CC Coordinators for their

concerned participation, please receive my heartily congratulations on receiving URI CC approval certificates and I hope the good work will be done in the respective areas.



He said that I encourage and appreciate the staff members of Peace Center and URI Pakistan for taking good care the arrangements to make the event successful; Madam Neelam Nisari Program Manager Peace Center Lahore, Sr. Sabina Rifata URI Women Coordinator, Mr. Asher Nazir Executive Secretary URI and Mr. Faisal Ilyas Executive Secretary Peace Center Lahore. I also say thanks to all the support staff for their best efforts. Thank you and May God bless you all.

Prepared by;

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URI Regional Coordinator Pakistan and Director Peace Center, Lahore

Faisal Ilyas

Executive Secretary, Peace Center Lahore, 26 September, 2019