

International Leadership Conference
“A New Paradigm of Leadership and Good Governance”
September 27, 2008
Goa, India

Goa Declaration

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) of India, in partnership with the International Centre Goa, the Institute Menezes Braganza, Goa and the IILM India Forum of the Centre for Policy Development and Management, New Delhi organized an International Leadership Conference (ILC) under the theme, “A New Paradigm of Leadership and Good Governance” in the International Centre Goa, on September 27, 2008.

The ILC was honoured to have H.E. Dr S S Sidhu, the Governor of Goa, as Chief Guest, and the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Goa, Shri Digambar Kamat as Guest of Honour at the inaugural session. Reflecting the deep interest across the political and public opinion spectrum in the important issues under discussion at the Conference, the President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-Goa, Shri Shripad Naik, MP; President of the National Congress Party (NCP)-Goa, Dr Wilfred D’Souza; former Chief Minister of Goa, Daman and Diu, Smt Shashikala Kakodkar; President of the Goa Pradesh District Committee Shri Subash Shirodkar; and civil society leaders representing the media, business, academia, government and faith organizations participated in the Conference.

The Conference discussed issues of importance and concern facing India, the dreams and aspirations of the people, and the challenges which need to be overcome if they are to be realized. It endorsed the call for a new paradigm of leadership and good governance given by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), and emphasized by the distinguished speakers at the Inaugural session, including HE the Governor, the Hon’ble Chief Minister, and leaders from the different political parties. The elements in this paradigm would include the following:

1. Respect for ethical principles, and the need for a “visionary and progressive approach” on the part of “transformative leaders” ;
2. A sense of service, “living for the sake of others”;
3. Building sustainable peace through co-operation beyond the boundaries of ethnicity, religion, and nationality. Leadership must give due regard to “sustainability” and “equity” and not merely be influenced by considerations of “profit” and “efficiency”;

4. The need for a transparent and participative approach in decision making; leadership must be transparent, accountable and seen to be practicing probity; it should focus equal attention to “means” as well as “ends”;
5. Constantly treating the world as one family, in which animosities, stereotypes and prejudices disappear.
6. An end to ostentatious living, and acknowledgement by businesses and industries that they are, as Gandhiji had urged, but “trustees of the nation’s wealth.”
7. An acknowledgement that the “state” is there to serve the people (not the other way round). Good governance must translate into sensitivity to and benefits for the common man; a “top-down” approach should be replaced with grassroots participation at the local level, which also respects the paradigms of leadership and good governance;
8. Political parties in a democracy need to agree on fundamental priorities of good governance, which needs to be sensitive and inclusive, and on the need for eradicating corruption in every area through developing a conscience for service for the greater good.
9. Character education in schools and colleges that teaches young people the importance of living for the sake of others, of respecting different cultures, traditions and faiths and of resolving differences and conflicts amicably and through dialogue and understanding. Only value-based education can help in producing good leaders in every field of activity;
10. The need to harness the power of faith and spirituality in establishing value-based governance and in guiding civil society and individual responses to the challenges of our times, as also in ensuring inter-faith harmony without which sustainable peace is unachievable. Spiritual and religious leaders and civil society share the responsibility of ensuring inter-community harmony.
11. The urgent need to reduce gross inequalities between different sections of the population. Unemployment and poverty are largely responsible for unrest and threats to peace and security, and a focus on creating employment opportunities should be intensified through appropriate economic policies.
12. The need to address shortcomings in the democratic framework--- establish a sound and healthy party system, strengthen democracy within political parties, inculcate sense of accountability and transparency, and end opportunistic practices reflected in frequent defections, the need for civic and political morality, and the need to inculcate the consciousness of liberty among all sections of the people.

13. The need to comprehensively address the main components of inclusive development, namely, harmony between individual and nature, the importance of eliminating poverty, and building an inclusive society in which there are no winners or losers.
14. The Conference agreed that maternal and infant malnutrition constituted the cruelest form of inequality and called for an end to practices like female foeticide. Nutrition and education were the two pillars on which children could grow into responsible and productive adults. It endorsed the call to urgently address issues of “inter-generational inequality” because of climate change, bio-diversity loss, etc. which would cause a huge threat to children yet to be born.
15. The conference discussed major issues including the need for sensitive but effective handling of threats to security arising from terrorism, religious extremism and other conflicts; places of religious worship should be centres for creating peace, tolerance and understanding and not sources of tension, conflict and violence; faith leaders should resolve differences and avoid misunderstanding through open and transparent dialogue instead of allowing them to fester;
16. It is important to motivate and involve the youth in improving the quality of life of underprivileged sections of the population through outreach programs; and ways to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through individual transformation, leadership, and good governance.
17. It applauded the UPF service-projects in different parts of the country.
18. The Conference highlighted the importance of creating awareness within civil society and institutions of governance in order to bring about clean and efficient governance; and the need for every individual to care for those less privileged.
19. The conference emphasized the importance of rejecting violence as an option in resolving differences and disputes. It strongly endorsed the UPF emphasis on “the family as a school of love and peace,” and the core principles of the world as one family and living for the sake of others, which were completely compatible with India’s own traditional ethos of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.”
20. It urged the media to fulfill its potential role in peace-building and deeply appreciated the basis of peace and good governance as defined by the UPF.
21. It recognized and welcomed the UPF initiatives to contribute to the creation of empowered but responsible citizens working in partnership with government in order to ensure sustainable peace and prosperity for all.