



James R. Mancham Peace and Diplomacy Research Institute



NEWSLETTER 2020 (1)

WELCOME

The world welcomed the year 2020 with wishes filled with joy, hope, health and prosperity. Nobody was thinking about a pandemic that will destroy lives, collapse economies and shift our way of life.

When we heard about the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19), it reminded us of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003. Nonetheless, it was business as usual until new cases of COVID-19 were officially announced in the country.

Fear, panic and uncertainty forced many nations to begin their own fight against the invisible enemy that had killed thousands of people worldwide. COVID-19 introduced a universal 'new' normal as countries prepared to lockdown, stay home, stay safe and maintain social distancing.

Governments, health professionals and front-line workers risk everything and work tirelessly to save those infected and to prevent the spread of the disease. This, however, did not prevent violence, unrest, hatred, racism and discrimination from emerging in many parts of the world.

During such a crisis, nations need to set aside their differences, support each other and work together to defeat the common enemy. Let's take this time to reflect, to pray as a family and to ask God to help us recover from this disaster. We need a divine intervention not only to heal the world but also to reconcile our hearts.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 11th August 2020 - 3rd Anniversary of the Institute
- 21st August 2020 - Nelson Mandela International Day
- 21st September 2020 - UN International Day of Peace

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**Protect yourself and others
from COVID-19.
Stay informed and stay safe!**



**UN International Day of Peace
21st September
"Shaping Peace Together"**

Our Vision

"To be an international hub for peace and diplomacy studies contributing to global peace through research, education, training and mediation."

IN THE NEWS

In loving memory of the founding President of the Republic of Seychelles

*“Along life’s sandy shores
Let me leave behind my humble footprints
Until the tide will come in
To wash them away
For no matter how one is moulded today
Time and tide waits for no man
And the ravaging waves of history
Soon cast one unto its wilderness
A forgotten being in the mists of a bygone past”*

James R. Mancham, Peace of Mind. Grainger Printing Ltd., Great Britain, 1989



Sir James Richard Marie Mancham, KBE - Ph.D. (Hon.)
(August 11, 1939 - January 8, 2017)

Remembering Rwanda

One of the incidental consequences of the pandemic has been for us all to make drastic changes to our diary commitments. The Institute had planned, as we did last year, to organise an event to mark the anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda that took place twenty-six years ago.

While this year’s event had to be cancelled, we can still remember what happened and how it remains a serious challenge to our belief in peace. A discussion was planned not only to recall the Rwanda massacres in 1994 but also to stimulate thought about the wider process of remembering events of this magnitude.

We will look for a future opportunity to sit down together to explore this key issue of ‘remembering’. Rwanda is too important to forget.



CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM
SEYCHELLES

Strengthening and formalising ties with CEPS

The Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS) and the Institute already have an excellent working relationship and in a meeting on 11th February 2020 they discussed about ways to strengthen and formalize their ties. During the meeting, the Institute presented a draft proposal to CEPS which included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and establishing the Seychelles Academy for Civil Society (SACS). Both institutions sought the approval of their management concerning the proposal that was subsequently endorsed. The next step will then be the signing of the MoU followed the setting up of a Committee to prepare activities as part of the agreement including the development of SACS.

EVENTS

2019 Africa Continental Summit

The 2019 Africa Continental Summit was held from the 28th to 30th November 2019 in Niamey, Niger. This prestigious event was organised by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) International in collaboration with the government of Niger, representatives of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the G5 Sahel.



The theme for the summit was “Building a Peaceful, United and Prosperous Africa centered on the universal values: peace, security, reconciliation, interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values”. More than 2,000 national and international delegates attended the event including current and former heads of state and government from 70 countries across Africa and beyond.

Through the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) Seychelles, a delegation from Seychelles was invited to attend the Summit. The delegates were Mr. Michel Pierre, the Chief Executive Officer of the Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS), Mr. Trevor Louise, the Chairperson of Stand-Up Step-Up Seychelles, and Ms. Diana Benoit who represented the Institute and UniSeY.

2019 Africa Summit and Interfaith Family Blessing Festival

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) International organised the African Summit and Interfaith Family Blessing Festival in Johannesburg, South Africa on 7th December 2019. The theme for the event which took place at the FNB Stadium in Soweto was “Building a Peaceful and Prosperous Africa Centered on Universal Values”. The festival aimed at supporting the continuous efforts by the government of South Africa to promote peace, prosperity and social cohesion.



Present at the event was a delegation from Seychelles including several members of the UPF-Seychelles, a local partner of the Institute with a vision to “sensitize the general public in building a national goal of peace in which every Seychellois can live in freedom, harmony, cooperation and prosperity”.

! Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Character Education Workshop (March 2020) and the International Rwanda Genocide Remembrance Day (April 2020) were cancelled.

OPINION



THE PANDEMIC AND PEACE

Only a supreme optimist could claim that the world is in a good place. Several millennia of human evolution have resulted in a multitude of technological wonders. But the ability to live together in peace seems at times to be little more advanced than ages ago.

For a world that was already in a fragile state, COVID-19 was the last thing anyone could have wished for. An invisible virus, spreading with the speed and tenacity of a wildfire, it thrives on weakness, oozing into the very fissures of society. Overnight, a reliance on global interactions was lost: no longer fast and assured travel, no longer the certainties of international trade, and no longer a single-minded focus on climate change. The global economy was broken, possibly beyond repair, and governments could no longer save the lives of large swathes of their respective populations.

But there are other casualties too, not least of all in relation to the containment, if not prevention, of wars. The delicate arrangements put in place to keep the peace have been challenged by competing demands for food and medical supplies. Nations now have their own priorities and finely-balanced alliances may well not weather the pandemic storm.

Seychelles is, in one respect, more fortunate than many nations. Because of its relative isolation it can largely insulate itself from external pressures. But it can only do this at a cost, and with tourism, the main pillar of the economy, at a standstill, foreign exchange is fast running out. No-one knows at this stage what the outcome will be, although it surely cannot be denied that this small island state is more vulnerable than it was before.

India, France, the United States and China, are the main players in the region. How will they try to manipulate the changes? Will Seychelles, in this weaker bargaining position, give way to demands for, say, the installation of foreign bases? In exchange for a regular supply of food imports, will it be forced into new alliances that are not necessarily in its own interests?

There are too many unknowns. One can only speculate. Yet we cannot ignore the new reality. An insidious virus has, in a few months, changed the world. Peace itself has lost ground. It is up to us all to ensure that this setback is only temporary. Along with all the other rebuilding of structures that has to be done, peace is an obvious priority. We cannot afford for it not to be.

For more information, or if you have any comments and/or suggestions, contact us by sending an email to Peace@unisey.ac.sc.