

United Nations Interfaith Harmony  
Partners-Zamboanga (UNI-HP-Z)

# World Interfaith Harmony Week



# 2016

*Celebrating Harmony:  
The Wellspring of*

# *Hope and Peace*

- The United Nations' Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
- The Background of the Celebration
- The United Nations Interfaith-Harmony Partners- Zamboanga (UNI-HP-Z)
- The List of Zamboanga City Partners of the WIHW 2016
- The Primer
- The Calendar of Activities
- Rationale and Objectives of Activities for the week-long celebration of the WIHW 2016
- The WIHW 2016 National Recognition and Partnership Initiative
- The Statement of Commitment
- The Prayer for the Candidates
- Harmony among Religions: The Golden Rule
- Harmony Prayer



Sixty-fifth session  
Agenda item 15

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/65/L.5 and Add.1)]

### 65/5. World Interfaith Harmony Week

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 53/243 A and B of 13 September 1999 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, 57/6 of 4 November 2002 concerning the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, 58/128 of 19 December 2003 on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, 60/4 of 20 October 2005 on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, 64/14 of 10 November 2009 on the Alliance for Civilizations, 64/81 of 7 December 2009 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and 64/164 of 18 December 2009 on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief,

*Recognizing* the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions to enhance mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people,

*Recalling with appreciation* various global, regional and subregional initiatives on mutual understanding and interfaith harmony, including the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, and the initiative "A Common Word",

*Recognizing* that the moral imperatives of all religions, convictions and beliefs call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding,

1. *Reaffirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace;
2. *Proclaims* the first week of February every year the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs;
3. *Encourages* all States to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week, based on love of God and love of one's neighbour or on love of the good and love of one's neighbour, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly informed of the implementation of the present resolution.

34th plenary meeting  
20 October 2010

# *The Background of the Celebration*

The United Nations (UN) Resolution passed on October 20, 2010 in recognition of “the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions to enhance mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people” was the inspiration for the Silsilah Dialogue Movement to call representatives of different groups in Zamboanga City to a meeting. The meeting was to consider collaborating on different activities to celebrate the World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) in February 2012 as embodied in the UN Resolution.

The response was enthusiastic. With the National Ulama Conference of the Philippines (NUCP) as the lead group and the Silsilah Dialogue Movement as the Secretariat, several organizations became involved in planning and executing the activities for the celebration set for February 01 to 07, 2012.

The success of the 2012 celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) in Zamboanga City was not only heartwarming but also a motivation for the groups involved to continue to work together in carrying out future celebrations. The groups in Zamboanga City decided to form a loose association among themselves which they named United Nations Interfaith-Harmony Partners-Zamboanga (UNI-HP-Z). Other happy outcomes of the first World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) celebration in the Philippines followed.

Zamboanga City's 1st District Congressional Representative Maria Isabelle “Beng” Climaco-Salazar (now the Mayor of Zamboanga City) sponsored a bill in the House enjoining the celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week in the Philippines as encouraged by the UN Resolution. Senator Loren Legarda sponsored a similar version for the Senate.

Both bills passed the respective houses and became a law of the land upon signing by President Benigno S. Aquino III, the Republic Act No. 10525:

*“An Act declaring the First Week of February of every year as World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) in the entire country and mandating its observance by the different Government Agencies.”*

The experience of working together for the 2012 celebration brought the same groups in Zamboanga City to carry out the celebration for 2013. This, like the earlier version, was also a great success.

The Silsilah Forum in Davao City, in Basilan and the Interreligious Center of Quiapo Church in Manila which is run by Silsilah, also implemented activities to celebrate WIHW 2013. The Silsilah Forum Davao reported the activities done and was given honorable mention by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought. The news of this award was relayed to the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Philippines.

The WIHW 2014 celebration brought the Zamboanga Partners led by Silsilah to win the First Prize in the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2014. H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan sponsors the annual WIHW Prize. The web site of the WIHW says that:

*“The prizes will be awarded to those events or texts that are judged to have been most successful in promoting Interfaith Harmony and impacting religious understanding.”*

The honor comes on the heels of a period of unstable peace and order in Zamboanga City especially the siege on September 9, 2013 by the MNLF Misuari faction which left the city with thousands of evacuees.

The UNI-HP-Z conducted series of activities for the celebration of WIHW 2015 with the theme, “Celebrating Interfaith Harmony: A Journey towards World Peace”. The different activities aimed to enjoin the different people from various walks of life to experience and rediscover the essence of Love of God, Love of One's Neighbor and the Love of the Common Good.

**We now encourage all to the celebration of the WIHW 2016. We hope and pray this will be a sign of hope for the Philippines, especially for us in Zamboanga City. The theme for the WIHW 2016 celebration is “Celebrating Harmony: The Wellspring of Hope and Peace.”**

Indeed, efforts to spread goodwill among people bring results that ultimately make people feel that the spirit of love is well alive. This is a feeling that we all need especially in these times when the events of the world will tend to convince us of the opposite. Let us jubilate in the knowledge that we are all bound by the **“Love of God, Love of neighbors and love of the common good.”**

Silsilah continues to serve the UNI-HP-Z as secretariat of the WIHW Zamboanga Partners. At the same time the Silsilah Dialogue Movement (SDM) is recognized by many as the convenor on the National Level for the WIHW starting from the Silsilah Forum groups in Mindanao and in the whole Philippines. Silsilah continues to invite all to celebrate the World Interfaith Harmony Week every year.

# **The United Nations Interfaith Harmony Partners- Zamboanga (UNI-HP-Z)**

Partners are groups or institutions willing to be part of the WIHW promising to offer any possible form of support and involvement. Each partner can be represented by three persons as members to represent their own group.

Associate Members are those individuals willing to be part of the WIHW and fill up our application forms.

The goals of the group are:

- **Maintain alive the spirit of the World Interfaith Harmony Week and;**
- **Develop harmony and solidarity among partners and associate members.**

Each of the partner group is free to continue pursuing its own objectives as a group but will work with other partners in implementing activities for the World Interfaith Harmony Week celebration every year.

Funding of the activity undertaken during the World Interfaith Harmony Week is the responsibility of each sponsoring group unless explicitly agreed by the partners to have a different agreement.

**Silsilah Dialogue Movement is in charge of the UNI-HP-Z**

**Represented by :**

- ◆ **Convenor-** Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra , PIME
- ◆ **Christian Coordinator -** Atty. Arsenio L. Gonzalez, Jr.
- ◆ **Muslim Coordinator -** Atty. Moh. Taha S. Arakama
- ◆ **Secretary -** Elizabeth L. Solis, EDC

# The List of Zamboanga City Partners of the WIHW 2016

The United Nations Interfaith Harmony Partners- Zamboanga (UNI-HP-Z) 2016 are the following: (in alphabetical order)

- ◆ Ateneo De Zamboanga University – Ateneo Peace Institute
- ◆ Commission on Higher Education (CHED) – Region IX
- ◆ Commission on Interreligious Dialogue of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga
- ◆ Department of Education (DepEd) – Zamboanga City Division
- ◆ Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) - Region IX
- ◆ Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) – Region IX
- ◆ Federacion del maga Barangay Kagawad de Zamboanga (FeBarKaZa)
- ◆ Golden Crescent Consortium of Peace Builders and Affiliates Inc.
- ◆ Inter-Faith Council of Leaders (IFCL)
- ◆ National Commission on Indigenous People – Zamboanga City Office
- ◆ National Commission on Muslim Filipinos – Region IX (NCMF-R-IX)
- ◆ Philippine Commission on Human Rights –Region IX (PCHR-9)
- ◆ Philippine National Police – Police Regional Office – Region IX
- ◆ Philippine Red Cross – Zamboanga City Chapter
- ◆ Responsible Union of Empowered Drivers Association (RUEDA)
- ◆ Rotary Club - Zamboanga
- ◆ Silsilah Dialogue Movement (SDM)
- ◆ Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (TODA)
- ◆ Universidad de Zamboanga (UZ)
- ◆ West Metro Medical Center
- ◆ Western Mindanao State University – Peace and Human Security Institute
- ◆ Zamboanga Chamber of Commerce Industry Foundation, Inc.
- ◆ Zamboanga City Medical Center (ZCMC)
- ◆ Zamboanga City State Polytechnic College (ZCSPC)
- ◆ Zamboanga City’s Interfaith Council
- ◆ Zamboanga Market Stall Operators
- ◆ Zamboanga Press Club
- ◆ Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology (ZSCMST)

# The Primer

## **Q1. What is the “World Interfaith Harmony Week”?**

A: The United Nations (UN) on October 20, 2010, recognizing the need for dialogue among different faiths and religions and their contribution for peace in the world, declared the first week of February of every year as “World Interfaith Harmony Week” *between all religions, faiths and beliefs. The UN encourages “all States to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world’s churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during the week. The celebration is based on the love of God and love of one’s neighbor or on the love of good and love of one’s neighbor, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions* (for more info. visit the website – [worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com](http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com)).

## **Q2. Why do we promote this special week?**

A: Because we believe in the spirit of this initiative. It unites us with many in the world who are joining together to rediscover and celebrate “Interfaith Harmony” guided by the basic principles or commandments of the love of God and the love of neighbor. This special week is gaining great attention in the world and it is a sign of hope.

## **Q3. There are already many other initiatives of dialogue and peace, why this new one?**

A: The United Nations as an international body realized that there is a need for a specific attention on the “interfaith harmony” guided by the love of God and the love of neighbor. This is a move towards a more “spiritual approach to



dialogue and peace". The United Nations is convinced now more than ever that development and peace without "love" cannot be achieved in the world. Thus, it is a new paradigm of dialogue and peace that finds many willing to rediscover and celebrate together "harmony among God's People".

**Q4. Is this celebration for all or only for Muslims/Christians?**

A: The United Nations invite all countries and religions to celebrate this interfaith harmony week, including indigenous people and even non- believers. However, in this primer we focus our attention on Muslims / Christians who represent the two largest religions in the world and are the largest presence in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao. We are convinced that in the heart of each person, there is a felt need to celebrate the love of God in order to rediscover the love of neighbor in all religions and cultures as part of the human family "linked" to God, as our common Creator.

**Q5. What about the issues that we need to face in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao related to the recognition of historical rights, poverty and peace?**

A: The World Interfaith Harmony Week celebration does not directly face these issues. This is not to ignore them, but we believe that this new approach can bring people closer to one another and motivate them to face together all the issues of society with a "new spirit". Thus, this celebration is an opportunity to rebuild love, friendship, sincerity, sensitivity and solidarity. In one word, the initiative can create "harmony" starting from our personal faith and belief in life.

It is a spiritual approach to dialogue and peace as an expression of “love”. This is needed today as the foundation of all the issues for a sustainable peace in our society.

**Q6. Christianity and Islam are two different religious movements; in “celebrating harmony” is it better to emphasize the common points or the differences?**

A: The basic principles of interfaith dialogue and harmony among people of different faiths are to approach others with *Sincerity, Sensitivity* and *Solidarity* (three S). Thus, the celebration has to be an expression of “sincerity”, guided by “sensitivity” in order to promote “solidarity”. This spirit of dialogue is in order to develop different dimensions and attitudes to take. We present here the acronym C.A.R.E: “*Courage*” in those who are convinced on the importance of interfaith harmony; “*Appreciation*” of what we have in common; “*Respect*” of our differences and; “*Example*” in order to move together guided by the common good of our society.

**Q7. What can we answer to those who are afraid of this form of dialogue and confuse it with “syncretism” and, as a result, they say that Christians and Muslims are almost the same and one can easily change religion, especially if one finds the change advantageous for one reason or another?**

A: No, the mixture of different religious beliefs or syncretism, and the attitude of some who use dialogue in order to convert others is not a genuine dialogue. Dialogue first of all is a spirituality and not a strategy. Real dialogue brings us to love and respect the differences, convinced that dialogue is the

attitude of God in creation and in all the manifestations of life where we find commonalities and differences. Love cares for all and respects all.

Real dialogue is expressed in an attitude of love which celebrates the love of God in freedom. Thus, dialogue is an expression of the love which is the “goal” of dialogue and in the process love becomes also the “means” that can bring people to the final goal that is peace on earth and in heaven.

**Q8. There is always the tendency of the majority religious groups in a country to put down the minority groups; this is also true in the Philippines where in some places Christians are the majority and in some other places Muslims are the majority. What can we do?**

A: This is one of the great challenges of today. People of dialogue has to help overcome prejudices and biases among religions and share more about the common good of not only one group or religion, but of society as a whole. If we believe in solidarity, freedom of religion, respect, harmony and peace we can “dream” that time will come when majority and minority will respect and help each other, in Europe, in Arabic countries, in China, and even in the Philippines: in Manila, in Marawi, in Davao, in Jolo, in Zamboanga, in Basilan, etc. This should be borned out of respect based on the fundamental rights of each person and on love, not out of respect based on fear or vested interest.

# CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

## *For the Weeklong Celebration of the WIHW 2016*

### **February 1, 2016 (Monday)**

- *Offices, Agencies and Institutions are invited to commemorate the celebration of the WIHW during the Flag Ceremony*
- *Interfaith Conference: A Reflection of the present realities in the context of the “Common Word”*

Royce Convention Center, Astoria Hotel,  
Climaco Ave., Zamboanga City  
1:00-5:00pm

### **February 2, 2016 (Tuesday)**

- *Youth Leaders' Conference*  
*Theme: “Youth Leaders Promoting Peace and Harmony through Social Media”*

JMR Hall, SDC Building ADZU La Purisima St., Zamboanga City  
1:00pm-5:00pm

### **February 3, 2016 (Wednesday)**

- *Blood Letting Activity*

In collaboration with WMSU-PHSI and ZCMC / WMSU Main  
Campus, Normal Road, Baliwasan, Zamboanga City  
9:00am-4:00pm

- *Because we Care: Interfaith Harmony in Healthcare*

West Metro Medical Center, Veterans Ave.,  
Tumaga Extension, Zamboanga City  
3:00pm

### **February 4, 2016 (Thursday)**

- *Gathering of Barangay Officials to Strengthen Intercultural Link and Launching of the new program “Plant, Care and Share”*

Harmony Village, Pitogo, Sinunuc, Zamboanga City / 9:00am-4:00pm

- *Youth Peace Convention: Educating for Harmony, Justice and Peace*

JMR Hall, SDC Building ADZU  
9:00am-12:00nn

- *Forum with Tricycle Operators and Drivers*

Centro Pastoral, Gov. Camins Ave., Zamboanga City  
10:00am-12:00nn

- *Youth in Action: A Service of Love, Care and Solidarity*

Zamboanga City Medical Center  
Dr. Evangelista St., Sta. Catalina, Zamboanga City / 3:00pm

**February 5, 2016 (Friday)**

- *Present the WIHW and its message to Muslim Communities*
- *Education-Formation for Zamboanga City Jail Male Inmates: “Poster and Slogan Making Contest”*

Zamboanga City Jail, Zone I, Valera St., Zamboanga City

9:00-11:00am

**February 6, 2016 (Saturday)**

- *Harmony Youth Day (HYD)*

Harmony Village, Pitogo, Sinunuc, Zamboanga City

8:00am-4:00pm

- *Blood Letting Activity*

Zamboanga Press Club in collaboration with

Philippine Red Cross - Zamboanga City Chapter

Zamboanga Press Club Office

9:00am

- *Moral Ascendancy Program on WIHW spirit for the PNP-Region 9*

ZCPS 11 (Central Police Station),

Gov Lim Ave, Brgy Zone II, Zamboanga City

10:00am

- *Education-Formation for Zamboanga City Jail Female Inmates: “Poster and Slogan Making Contest”*

Zamboanga City Jail, Zone I, Valera St., Zamboanga City / 1:00-3:00pm

- *Harmony with Mother Earth: Care for My Environment (IEC)*

Mampang transitory site by Ateneo De Zamboanga University

**February 7, 2016 (Sunday)**

- *Prayer and Message of WIHW during the Eucharistic celebration and other Christian Community Services*

- *Special Service at the Home for the Aged (FeBarKaZa)*

Talon-Talon, Zamboanga City

9:00am

- *Culminating Activity*

Celebrity Hall, Astoria Hotel

Climaco Avenue, Zamboanga City

2:00-5:00pm

**February 1-7, 2016 (Monday to Sunday)**

- *Neighbors in Harmony*

- *Day of Mercy and Reconciliation*

- *WIHW Info Graphic Rolling Exhibit*

ADZU College Lobby, BC Lobby, JMR Hall Lobby

- *School Peace Camp, Poster and Slogan Making Contest in DepEd Schools*

# Rationale and Objectives of Activities for the week-long celebration of the WIHW 2016

## A. SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES:

Though there are new activities for this year, some are being done since 2012 up to now.

### ◆ **Hanging of Tarpaulins**

We start the week-long celebration of WIHW with the hanging of the tarpaulins as a declaration to support, with the aim to inform the people and let them be aware of the celebration. Business sectors, government agencies, schools, universities and other religious and private institutions are invited to participate and support this activity in all possible ways.

### ◆ **Blood Letting Activity**

This activity will be conducted by Western Mindanao State University through Peace and Human Security Institute in partnership with Zamboanga City Medical Center and Zamboanga Press Club in collaboration with Philippine Red Cross -Zamboanga City Chapter . We support this advocacy because we believe: *Every Blood Donation is a Gift of Life*. Doing this kind of activity will be a big help to those people who are most in need and we also help to overcome cultural and religious barriers still existing among people by donating blood.

### ◆ **Because we Care: Interfaith Harmony in Health Care**

This is a gathering of senior members of the West Metro Medical Center to reflect on the WIHW 2016 with the theme : *“To move towards a Formation of Harmony Zone in the Hospital.”*

### ◆ **Education-Formation for Zamboanga City Jail Inmates**

This formation aims to make the participants become aware and internalize the celebration of the WIHW. The essence of the initiative is to focus on the “Love of God and Love of One’s Neighbor” through poster and slogan making contest. These are among the initiatives that can give hope, love and courage to the detainees of Zamboanga City Jail.

◆ **Forum with Tricycle Operators and Drivers**

This activity aims to inform the drivers the essence of Interfaith Harmony in order to share also this spirit to the passengers. After the information dissemination the attendees will be given stickers to be posted on their vehicles and to share it with all others. The leading group of this initiative is the Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (TODA).

◆ **A special gathering of Leaders including Muslim and Christian Leaders (Interfaith Conference: A Reflection of the present realities in the context of the “Common Word”)**

Leaders including Muslim and Christian religious leaders will be invited by the Zamboanga City’s Interfaith Council headed by the city Mayor. The focus of this forum is on the open letter “*A Common Word*” in the situation of today. Two Muslims and two Christians speakers will help in this forum.

◆ **Gathering of Barangay Officials to Strengthen Inter-Cultural Link and Launching of the new program “Plant, Care and Share”**

This activity is done in collaboration with DILG of Zamboanga City. This is a new program that we will present to the officers of some selected barangays, inviting them to understand the urgency of building good relation in their respective barangay promoting inter-cultural and interfaith relations, and inviting the people to “Plant, Care and Share”, anything possible, including herbal plants and vegetables with health benefits. The slogan “Plant, Care and Share” will also be applied to PLANT friendship among neighbors, to CARE and SHARE with the neighbors, including people of different cultures and religions.

◆ **Youth in Action: A Service of Love, Care and Solidarity**

This activity is facilitated by the SilPeace Youth of Silsilah together with the Silsilah Staff and other volunteers. This is a time of sharing goodness and giving simple food to the patients at Zamboanga City Medical Center (ZCMC). In this way we can promote care and solidarity to the patients in the hospital.

◆ **Present the WIHW and its Message to Muslim Communities**

The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos-Region IX and other Muslim leaders will help transmit awareness about the significance of Muslim and Christian dialogue; to build friendship and harmonious relationships among people of different religions and cultures and encourage all Muslim communities to spread the message of Interfaith Harmony.

◆ **Prayer and Message of WIHW during the Eucharistic celebration and other Christian Community Services**

To spread the spirit of the WIHW especially on Sunday, February 07, 2016 inviting those present to Christian celebrations to internalize the spirit of the World Interfaith Harmony Week. The Commission on Inter-religious Dialogue of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga (CIRD-AZ) will prepare guidelines and reflections for the Catholics. Other Christian denominations will also spread the spirit of the World Interfaith Harmony Week in their communities.

◆ **Moral Ascendancy Program on the WIHW spirit for the PNP-Region 9**

This is an activity sponsored by the Philippine National Police of Zamboanga City. During the WIHW they will be helped to focus their attention on the spirit of the celebration, emphasizing on the Love of God, Love of One's Neighbor and the Love of the Common Good. Sponsoring this activity they re-affirm their commitment to work for peace with the hope that any good achievement acquired for peace in Mindanao will continue.

◆ **Harmony Youth Day (HYD)**

This activity aims to create an avenue for the young people of diverse cultures and religions to come together to experience and establish good relationships and to strengthen the common good between Muslims, Christians and people of other living faiths. "The Love of God and Love of One's Neighbor" is a ground of understanding for all, engaging the youth in creating a more peaceful world. At the same time this is also a gathering of student leaders coming from different schools, colleges and universities. This activity will be sponsored by the SilPeace Youth Program of Silsilah in Harmony Village.



**◆ Youth Leaders’ Conference with the theme: “Youth Leaders promoting Peace and Harmony through Social Media”**

This is a youth leaders sharing focus on social trust and shared-goal in a culture of cooperation and participation entering in the Culture of Dialogue towards Peace. To realize that social media used to bridge divisions between adversaries, especially among the youth , has to be used for Harmony, Solidarity and Peace.

**◆ Special Service at the Home for the Aged**

This activity is sponsored by the Fedaracion del maga Barangay Kagawad de Zamboanga (FeBarKaZa). It aims to give Attention, Love and Care to the Elderly.

**◆ Ateneo De Zamboanga University(ADZU) Activities**

A week of Information Education Campaign (IEC) with the following activities: WIHW Info Graphic Rolling Exhibit, Youth Peace Convention: Educating for Harmony, Justice and Peace; Harmony with Mother Earth: Care for My Environment. These activities aim to give information on the History and purpose of the WIHW celebration to help the students, faculty and staff understand and become aware on the significance of the WIHW Commemoration. This seeks to educate about harmony with the self and others, justice and fairness to achieve genuine peace. And to promote more awareness on how to care, protect, preserve and conserve our environment and its resources.

**◆ Department of Education (DepEd) Activities**

The DepEd Schools will conduct an Educational Program focusing on Dialogue and Peace; to encourage the youth to be engaged in promoting harmony and peace within their school premises with the following activities: School Peace Camp, Arts in Action (Slogan and Poster Making Contest). These activities also aim to raise awareness among students, faculty and staff about the importance of Dialogue and Peace in our daily lives.

**◆ Culminating Activity**

It is a tradition of the WIHW celebration in Zamboanga City to have a gathering of all the leaders of our United Nations Interfaith Harmony Partners and other respected leaders and representatives of different groups and institutions to be together during the culmination of the celebration. This year, we will also invite all those who have registered their intentions to run in the different political positions in the city level to pray for them and

with them for this coming election. (*see the prayer on page 19*)

## **B. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES:**

### **1. Commemorate the celebration of the WIHW during the Flag Ceremony**

The Flag Ceremony is an important moment of gathering of different government sectors, schools, offices and institutions. To give attention to the celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) 2016 and to inform the public on the message of “Love of God, Love of Neighbor and the Love of the Common Good” we propose to all sectors of our society to give special attention to this event on February 01, 2016 (Monday). Guided by some suggested guidelines to make this moment meaningful. Each group is also invited to use their own creativity.

Suggested ideas:

- Read the information/message about the WIHW and emphasize that this is the initiative of United Nations (UN). It is encourage by the Republic Act No. 10525: *“An Act declaring the First Week of February of every year as World Interfaith Harmony Week in the entire country and mandating its observance by the different Government Agencies”* and an executive order of the Mayor of Zamboanga City.
- Present the theme of this year's celebration *“Celebrating Harmony: The Wellspring of Hope and Peace”* and commenting on the importance of this celebration for the specific sectors who may do this activity.
- Introduce the HARMONY PRAYER as a universal prayer and close the activity with this prayer or the HARMONY SONG.

### **2. Neighbors in Harmony**

Neighbors can take this occasion to share how to develop better harmony among them and, if needed, to ask for forgiveness for any attitude, feeling or situation among themselves that need to be addressed in the spirit of forgiveness. To share also a spontaneous and universal prayer, like the “Harmony Prayer” and to offer simple snacks and any other creative activity that will build better harmony among neighbors. The initiative can start first among neighbors of the same faith as a first step and after, if a family is ready, invite/visit also neighbors of different religions.

### **3. Day of Mercy and Reconciliation**

We requested the judges of Zamboanga City to help in closing the cases that can be closed according to the law with the hope that during the World Interfaith Harmony Week, a number of prisoners can be released. Some of the judges already expressed their intentions to help, to allow us during the celebration to gather those who will be released for a ceremony called *“Day of Mercy and Reconciliation.”*

# The WIHW 2016 National Recognition and Partnership Initiative

## Rationale

Convinced by the importance of the WIHW, the Silsilah Dialogue Movement will start in 2016 a “WIHW National Recognition and Partnership Initiative” in collaboration with partners of the UNI-HP-Z willing to join in this new program. This will help inspire many in the Philippines to join the annual celebration of WIHW.

## Objectives:

- 1) To continue maintain international links with the initiators of the WIHW who are committed to promote harmony in the world, especially among cultures and religions.
- 2) To formally launch a national partnership initiative to encourage many on the national level to celebrate the WIHW offering guidelines and suggestions in the spirit of service while leaving to each group their own autonomy and creativity to implement the WIHW with their own resources.
- 3) To spread through media initiatives done on international and national levels in relation to the WIHW and to invite to Harmony Village, Zamboanga City before the end of 2016 few from each of the provinces or groups who celebrate the WIHW in their places, for sharing of experiences and commitment to support one another.

# THE STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

*We, people of different cultures and religions believe in the power of HARMONY as a way to peace.*

*On the occasion of World Interfaith Harmony Week 2016 we pledge to go beyond the simple appreciation of “HARMONY”, and commit ourselves to reflect more on how to promote harmony with our lives and actions, inspite of the signs of violence around us and in the world today. We are inspired by the theme of the WIHW 2016 celebration in Zamboanga City, “Celebrating Harmony: The Wellspring of Hope and Peace” and we reaffirm our commitment to work together for the common good of the society.*

*We know that our own religion and culture has many teachings that guide us to go in HARMONY with God, Ourselves, Others and the whole of Creation.*

*We promise to rediscover and appreciate the elements of HARMONY that are dear to our faiths and cultures and share these with others, with our lives, not only with our words.*

*We commit ourselves to move in “HARMONY” as a special commitment and we pledge once again to find ways, according to our positions in society, to live and promote “HARMONY” as a sign of hope and real Peace.*

*We know that this is a long process, but it can help us and others to face urgent issues present in our society, in the spirit of “HARMONY”, inspired by the love of God, the love of neighbor and the love of the common good.*

*So help us God!*

This commitment will be signed by the participants during the culminating activity of the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2016 celebration on February 7, 2016 in Zamboanga City.

To be followed by the Prayer with the participants for the May election 2016 Candidates in Zamboanga City.

## *Prayer for the Candidates*

*Almighty God, you have called each of us to a specific role in life. Fathers and mothers to be the leaders in the family; priests and imams and monks to be leaders in our religious practice; teachers to be leaders in the schools; and political leaders in our exercise of our duties and our expectations as citizens of our country.*

*Almighty God, you have planted in us the seed of freedom in the exercise of our political rights. It is our belief, Almighty God, that your will is expressed when the will of the people is allowed free and unhampered expressions.*

*We pray, Lord God that in the campaign for the upcoming election the candidates will speak the truth, that they will not attempt to exploit the circumstances of voters so as to gain advantage for themselves, that they will seek to conduct a peaceful campaign that will allow the full exercise of freedom of choice by the voters.*

*And when the winners shall be identified, Lord God, we pray that they will affirm their victories as your call to them to serve you and your people – serve devotedly, serve diligently and serve generously. We pray that you shower them with graces, for the many responsibilities that will be theirs.*

*Hoping for your love, mercy and compassion, nothing is impossible. AMEN...*

# Harmony among Religions: The Golden Rule

It is an amazing discovery that in spite of differences, all major religions share the same “Golden Rule” of the love of neighbor.

- **Hinduism:** “This is the sum of duty: Do not do to others what would cause you pain if done to you.”

(Mahabharata 5: 15-17)

- **Buddhism:** “Hurt not others in ways that you would find hurtful” (Udanavarga 5:18)

- **Confucianism:** “It is the maxim of loving kindness:” Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.”

(Analects – Rongou – 15:23)

- **Judaism:** “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. This is the entire law; all the rest is commentary”

(Talmud, Shabban 31a)

- **Christianity:** “I give you a new commandment love one another, you must love one another just as I have loved you”

(Jn. 13,34)

- **Islam:** “No one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself.”

(The 42 Traditions of An-Nawawi)

Thus, the GOLDEN RULE is the most fundamental, common, ethical denominator of all religious and non-religious belief systems on earth. This convergence of love encourages us to reaffirm that dialogue is the expression of love and it is not only a means, but also a goal in life. This relation or dialogue that starts from God becomes a spirituality when we experience it in our life. It moves us to work together for the common good.

## *Harmony Prayer*

*Oh Lord I cry for peace,  
Purify my eyes to see peace,  
Purify my mind to understand peace,  
Purify my heart to love peace,  
Purify my memory to work for peace;  
The peace that comes from Your  
love and compassion.*

*O Lord, sustain my vision of peace  
following Your inspiration,  
You have many ways of revealing Your  
presence and love for humanity,  
But Your style is constant,  
You are in dialogue with all,  
You care for all.*

*Make me, O Lord, a sign of Your peace,  
Living a life-in-dialogue with You  
to understand Your silence  
and seek Your presence  
In dialogue with myself  
to rediscover the meaning of my life;  
In dialogue with others  
to move together in harmony with all;  
and in dialogue with creation  
to care for the earth.*

*Give me, O Lord,  
the courage to live-in-dialogue  
In the midst of divisions and conflicts  
and to build peace with all people  
of sincere hearts who believe  
in Your love and compassion.  
Amen.*

The Harmony Prayer is a universal prayer for people of different religions. The prayer was composed by the Silsilah Dialogue Movement. The use of the word "LORD", in the prayer is related to the "Lord of the Universe" a universal attribute for God.



**United Nations Interfaith Harmony  
Partners - Zamboanga (UNI-HP-Z)**

Silsilah Center  
2/F Rodriguez Bldg., 137 Gov. Alvarez Avenue (Buenavista)  
7000, Zamboanga City, Philippines

Telefax # (062) 991-5663, 983-0014  
Mobile Number: 0935-974-0005

or you may email us at:  
[uniharmonypartners@gmail.com](mailto:uniharmonypartners@gmail.com)

Visit us:  
[www.harmonylink.info](http://www.harmonylink.info)