First written report of Press Conference on 27 January 2018 at National Press club Islmabad

UIPM launches ‘Say No to Religious Hatred’ to commemorate WIHW

Islamabad

As part of its celebrations for World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) 2018 of United Nations, Universal Interfaith Peace Mission (UIPM) announced a month long programme titled ‘Say No to Religious Hatred’ from January 27 till February 28, 2018.

Recognizing that the moral imperatives of all religions, convictions and beliefs call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding, UIPM Chairman Allama Dr GR Chishti announced the month-long programme at the National Press Club, Islamabad on Sunday in which he highlighted the importance of interfaith harmony for global peace and prosperity.

The WIHW is being celebrated by UIPM in collaboration with United Religious Initiative Multi-Cooperation Circle Islamabad, Common Word Pakistan and Haleema Welfare Trust. During the month-long programmes, UIPM in collaboration with Haleema Welfare Trust will hold free medical camps for members of minorities communities at Balmik Hindu Temple, Lalkurti, at a Christian church in Rawalpindi, and Faisal Colony, G-7/1 and Chashma Town. Apart from the medical camp, the UIPM delegation will also visit schools, colleges and universities across the country to teach the young generation the true essence of interfaith harmony and inculcate into them the knowledge of ‘Say No to Religious Hatred’.

In his press talk, Dr Chishti drew the attention towards the most persisting hurdles and hindrances in the way of interfaith harmony pointing out that apart from other historic events during the month, the WIHW also coincides with the Jewish Holocaust in which around 6 million Jews were annihilated by Nazis. “This is one of the major incident of religious hatred and apart from Jewish Holocaust, the mankind has seen many incidents like Cambodian genocide of 1975 to 1979, Rwandan genocide from April 7 to mid-July 1994 in which over 5 million people were killed while cleansing of Bosnian Muslims during the 1992–1995 Bosnian War and the latest crisis of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar are some prominent examples in modern times where human beings have been killed with impunity just because of their ethnic, religious and cultural values.

Dr Chishti explained in detail as how extremist elements have flooded the world with literature containing abhorrence and hatred, and their so-called interpretations of religion are basic hurdles in way of interfaith harmony.

He said that all these ideas are widely spread into the masses not only in Pakistan but into the whole world as well, created and formed by extremists as suited to them, until these ideas are not cured, dispelled and removed, we do not think there can be any scope for interfaith harmony.

“However, there is only light to clear this all darkness and that is Common Word Movement and Amman Message started by King Abdullah II of Jordan, the member of the family of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and the guardian of the three monotheistic religions`, sacred places i.e. Muslims, Jews and Christians equally. The documents of Amman’s Message and Common Word contain cure to the above mentioned diseases. This is the document that gave birth to “World Interfaith Harmony Week of UN”—we are celebrating. It would work if the world joins hands to impose these documents officially into the Muslim countries which are members of the UN.

Dr Chishti said that Universal Interfaith Peace Mission introduced the Common Word Movement in Pakistan in October 2008 and had requested Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony last year to make it part of the national educational curriculum so that culture of interfaith harmony may prevail. “We declare that the ideas floated by extremists are false and have created hatred; and we need help and support to clarify the situation to the masses in its right form to bring positive change and create culture of love, peace and interfaith harmony, mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence as well as culture of dialogue,” he added.

UIPM Chairman pointed out that during the month long celebrations of WIHW the true essence of WIHW which was drafted by Prince Dr Ghazi bin Mohammad of Jordan and presented at the UN by King Abdullah II of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be highlighted in true letter and spirit. It encompasses the message for the people around the world and wants to tell them that when pointless bloodshed in the name of religion is originating hysteria around the globe, it necessitates making intensive hard work to bring together faiths and cultures on a platform and for that goal interfaith harmony is the best possible solution.

He said that it is need of the hour that declaration of excommunication and blame of infidelity among rival religious groups should be declared null and void. The World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on the pioneering work of the Common Word initiative which calls upon religious leaders to engage in a dialogue based on two common fundamental religious Commandments; Love of God, and Love of the Neighbour, without nevertheless compromising any of their own religious tenets.