



National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony – Pakistan

World Interfaith Harmony Week - Pakistan

February 01, 2021 - February 07, 2021



Report on Activities of Interfaith Harmony Week Pakistan

Media Briefing on World Interfaith Week and Living Together Movement

National Council for Interfaith Peace and Harmony Pakistan (NCIPHP) launched the “Living Together Movement” at the start of the Interfaith Harmony Week at the press club on Monday February 01, 2021. Secretary General (NCIPHP) Mr. Javaid William, presented a resolution that stated, “The Living Together Movement is a civic initiative designed to help, prevent and resolve ethnic, racial and religious conflicts through dialogue, open-hearted discussions, compassionate and empathetic listening, and diversity celebration. Organised in schools, colleges, universities, NGOs, government departments and communities across Pakistan, members of the Living Together Movement are individuals who recognise the same humanity in all people and are passionate about bridging the gap between different sects, religions and ethnicities,”. The council members hoped, this will reduce the likelihood of religiously and ethnically motivated violence in Pakistan.



Secretary General (NCIPHP) Mr. Javaid William briefed about the World Interfaith Harmony Week and Living Together Movement. He said that Pakistanis have joined the World Interfaith Harmony Week, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2010, to support mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue to constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith. World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on UNGA Resolution A/65/PV.34 and to be celebrated for a worldwide week of interfaith harmony. It was proposed in 2010 by HM King Abdullah II and HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan. All around the world, organizations and individuals host events during the first week of February to help neighbours of different faiths get to know each other and build a foundation for more peaceful and friendly communities.

World Interfaith Harmony Week provides a platform, one week in a year—when all interfaith groups and other groups of goodwill can show the world how powerful, a movement they are. At the National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony–Pakistan, believes that observing World Interfaith

Harmony Week and helping individuals host events in observance is an extension of the mission to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world.



Mr. Javaid William further said that the Living Together Movement is an important civic initiative designed to help prevent and resolve ethnic, racial and religious conflicts through dialogue, open-hearted discussions, compassionate & empathic listening, and diversity celebration. The National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony – Pakistan aims to end the sectarian or ethnic discrimination and urge the people from different religions and ethnic groups to work for acceptance of life and humanity, respect and show tolerance among one another so that the society become a balanced one thus, working toward peace building initiatives in uniting communities and reducing the likelihood of religiously and ethnically motivated violence in Pakistan. The General Assembly encourages all member states to spread the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the mosques, churches, temples, synagogues and other places of worship during this week on a voluntary basis and according to their own religious traditions or convictions.

Addressing a press conference at the Nisar Usmani Auditorium of the Lahore Press Club, National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony leaders requested everyone to give all respect to each and every person without any religious, sectarian or ethnic discrimination for economically stronger and prosperous Pakistan.

Launch of Living Together Movement in collaboration with ICERM and Ministry of Human Rights Minorities Affairs & Interfaith Harmony.

National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony Secretary Mr. Javaid William from Catholic Community, Prof. Syed Mahmood Ghaznavi – Ahl E Hadith School of thought, Dr. Majeed Abel – Moderator Presbyterian Church, Rev. Fr. James Channan – Catholic, Allama Shakeel-ur-Rehman Nasir - Ahl E Hadith School of thought, Hafiz Mufti Syed Ashiq Hussain – Bralvy School of thought, Dr. Ruhiyeh Muffedi – Bahai Community, Dr. Masood Ahmad- Bralvy School of thought Kalyan Sing Kalyan- Sikh Community, Amarnath Randhawa- Hindu Community, Hafiz Syed Qazim Raza Naqvi-Shia School of thought, Allama Hafiz Zubair Ahmad Virk- Deuband School of thought and Hafiz Sami Ullah - Ahl E Hadith School of thought informed journalists about the Living Together Movement. They said that it is an important civic initiative designed to help prevent and resolve ethnic, racial and religious conflicts through dialogue, and open-hearted discussions. They said that members of the Living Together Movement are peace-driven individuals who recognize the same humanity in all peoples and are passionate about bridging the gap between different races, ethnicities, religions, political views, genders, generations and nationalities in order to increase respect, tolerance, acceptance, understanding and harmony. They further said that all religions and sects should cooperate with each other to create peace and promote values of coexistence in the society. They asked all citizens to restore compassion, respect and tolerance to the centre of morality and religion and to teach each other that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence or hatred is illegitimate. “We have to ensure that young people are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures,” they said. “We have to end duality and adopt values from different religions so that we may be able to create an atmosphere where everyone might have religious freedom,” they added. They also said, the religion must be used to end differences among the masses. They said that they are ready to bring women together to create awareness about peace and harmony and to develop family unit where peace and harmony, respect and acceptance of difference becomes important to bring positive changes in the society. They urged leaders of different religions to include the message of peace and social harmony, brotherhood, acceptance

and coexistence in prayer sessions. The Interfaith Harmony Week encourages grassroots events that link people together in a global wave of understanding, respect, and action. The National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony believes that observing the week and helping individuals to host events is an extension of their mission to cultivate harmony among the religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world.



Multi-Faith / Multi Religions YOUTH CONVENTION

To celebrate the UN-supported World Interfaith Harmony Week, some of the renowned youth leaders are working in Lahore's nine different towns to bridge the gap between different communities, generations, ethnicities and religions to increase respect, acceptance, understanding and harmony. Mr. Javaid William, said, "Our young members are visiting different religious places and educational institutions in their respective areas and come together to listen to, talk with, learn from, understand and share with one another about their cultural and religious background, peace, human dignity, forgiveness, and any topics of interest."



Secretary General Mr. Javaid William, National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony informed the audience of a roundtable discussion on multi-faith youth convention which was also attended by Punjab Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs Ejaz Alam Augustine, that the youth leaders must support mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue to constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and a way to promote harmony between all communities. In 2010, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the World Interfaith Harmony Week and encouraged all member states to spread the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in all places of worship during the first week of February.



Secretary General Mr. Javaid William National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony requested fellow citizens to offer respect to each and every person without any discrimination and for a economically stronger and prosperous Pakistan. Addressing the youth convention, Honourable Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Ejaz Alam Augustine said that the provincial government will soon introduce an Interfaith Harmony Policy to promote peaceful coexistence. Besides Mr. Javaid William and Allama Mahmood Ghaznavi, Mufti Syed Ashiq Hussain and youth from different areas also participated in the roundtable and shared their experiences.



Honourable Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Ejaz Augustine underscored collective responsibility to do something better and to protect human rights of all. “We are observing that people are being targeted because of their religion or other orientation,” he said. He asked the youth leaders to work regularly to promote a culture of peace in the society. On the occasion, the Minister was informed about the Living Together Movement; a key civic initiative designed to help

prevent and resolve ethnic, racial and religious conflicts through dialogue and open-hearted discussions. It is pertinent to mention here that members of the movement are peace-driven individuals who recognize the same humanity in their fellows and are passionate about bridging the gap between different communities.

Multi-faith leaders to deal with COVID-19 and its Repercussions

In the absence of any effective medicine or vaccine, COVID-19 remains a global threat. Social and political sciences inform us about patterns of behaviour among individuals, communities, societies and states in times of crisis and conflict. In such situations, policymakers and societies can have the tendency to become less tolerant. Violence and exclusion against people perceived to represent a threat may “not only (be) tolerated but also justified”. The roles and reactions of religious communities in such a context become essential for many people, guiding them to cope with the situation and interact with “the other”.



Secretary General of the National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony Mr. Javaid William said that The NCIPHP has followed a similar pattern of crisis management during the pandemic. Rapid but informed responses by community leaders, religious actors and stakeholders to address narratives and issues are crucial to prevent negative dynamics and damages to social cohesion. Cross-community links offering a shared humanity are of great importance to encourage and support interfaith initiatives responding to the global challenges. Religious agencies and policymakers are focusing on how to engage constructively with each other and be more effective in responding to the pandemic. Inter-religious dialogue work has become a tool of increasing importance in

developing inter-community trust, relations and cooperation in numerous sectors, such as development, environmental protection and peace building. It is integral to interfaith work in general. In fragile contexts, particularly those currently experiencing conflict or dealing with the legacy of a conflict, interreligious dialogue has served to bridge communities and alleviate tensions.



National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony Secretary General Mr. Javaid William talking to the media where all the members were present said that as some minorities are marginalized in some societies and have economic disadvantages leading them to potentially suffer more during a pandemic, tensions and faith/ethnic differences can be exaggerated; leaders may use the pandemics to further divide communities.

Exposure / Excursion visits to Multi-Faith/Multi Religious Institutions and places

Under the leadership of Secretary General Mr. Javaid William National Council for Interfaith Peace & Harmony leaders, scholars from different faiths visited different Madrassas, Mosques, Gurdwara and Churches. Leaders from Islam, Christianity and Sikhism visited the Markaz Quran O Sunnah Lawrence road Lahore, The Badshahi Mosque Lahore, Gurdwara Dera Sahib Lahore, Jamia Ashrafia Lahore, Jamia Urwa-tul-Wusqa Lahore and Naulakha Presbyterian Church Lahore to help prevent and resolve misunderstanding and misinterpretation through dialogue and open-hearted discussions. The day ended at the Naulakha Presbyterian Church Lahore with the message of peace, peaceful coexistence and happiness for all the citizens.











