**REPORT on a WIHW’s event in northern France on Saturday February 6th**

**“What do Spiritualities bring to Our Common Life?” (***Apports des Spiritualités au Vivre Ensemble ?*)

**1/ Since 2010,** although various interreligious activities have been hosted **in Northern France** yet the **United Nations ‘s initiative** (A/RES/65/5) for a **World Interreligious Harmony Week had remained unknown around here**.

**2/** In 2020 a few FPU\* members in Hauts-de-France, concerned about their country’s future, generated a thoughts-harvesting-circle to heal France called: **the circle of "*Friends Fond of a Respectful France."***

**Respect** why? Simply because, on the way to a better France, it seems to us that a main objective would be **to first promote more respect at all levels.**

Some self-respect to begin with, then Respect between husbands and wives, between parents and children, between citizens and leaders, **between different religions and spirituality**, and finally to promote more respect for nature, our nourishing land.

That resulted with the setting of a series of public Zoom meetings under the **overall moto**:

**“*What Kind of France do we dream of?”***

**3/** Thus for that series’ second edition, on **Saturday February 6th, 2021**, the **World Interreligious Harmony Week’s spirit could finally be honored for once here.** About 25 guests and speakers, leaders of various local **religious and civil associations,** gathered **via internet to** passionately address the topic: **“What do Spiritualities bring to Our Common Life?” (***Apports des Spiritualités au Vivre Ensemble ?*)

To start, **Chantal Nga Onana**, as a warm and eloquent MC, introduced the program and the three motivated speakers who then captivated the audience:

**Othmane Iquioussen**, imam of the Raismes Mosque and co-author of "Peace be with you / Yes, religions are made to unite!",

**Vazken Eskijian,** deacon of the Armenian Apostolic Church St. James, and

**Jean-Henri Vanalderwelt** of the "Interfaith Association for Peace and Development". IAPD

**4/** The intention for that theme was less to set up a show of inter religious diversity in dialogue, than to **respond to French laic society doubts whether** **religious bodies do foster a better cohesive society?** Panelists and responding listeners illustrated their answers more **with concrete personal experiences** than with technical theoretical explanations.

**5/** They were pleased to share their personal stories and reflections, which were greatly appreciated. Among **those commentators**, let us mention **Abdel Malik Richard Duchaine,** president of the association ***"Open Hands",*** **Benedicte Suzuki,** president of the association "***Women in the Relief of Peace",*** **Father Pascal Dame**, diocesan ***catholic delegate to interfaith relations*** in north, **Brice Wete-Matouba,** *city councillor*, **Karen Makosso,** president of the Collective of ***International Solidarity Organizations for Immigrants*** , and **Kheira**, *a refugee* housed with her family by the couple from the FPU-Nord de France, **Heidi and Denis Théry.** Everyone enjoyed this deep and warm meeting.

**6/** **Some Highlights**: - Religions invite us to surpass ourselves, to welcome without a priori, to help each other and to solve the problems of society. - They meet a fundamental need of every human being - The main principles of religions and those of the Republic being similar, let’s therefore encourage the links between politicians and religious - The value of prayer and meditation - etc.

**7/** -Find attached a French **TRANSCRIPT** of the various sharing’s and the **POSTER** for that event.

 -The link to that **event’s VIDEO** in French, follows here:

 [**https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SS2XEKFgO4DdvdsuzGkSCUIPdhRxwMqJ/view**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SS2XEKFgO4DdvdsuzGkSCUIPdhRxwMqJ/view)

**Thank you for your stimulating sponsoring of that annual celebration**