



Historical Declaration of Friendship Across Religions in the making

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Wednesday September 26 th 2018, at The Peace Palace in The Hague, the Carnegie Foundation and the Elijah Interfaith Institute announced a new partnership between the two organization. The partnership revolves around a Declaration of friendship across religions, as follow up to Elijah's Make Friends initiative and a series of global activities towards and as follow up to the declaration.

In June 2020 prominent religious leaders of the various faiths in the world will be invited to sign the declaration at an historic summit at the Peace Palace.

The overall aim of the collaboration is to enhance friendship between religions, thus fostering peace and providing hope. This aim is met by providing an example at the highest level, thereby inspiring many, in an ongoing way, as well a by creating infrastructure to promote dialogue and understanding in the long run.

Building on the convening power of the unique and iconic venue to the world related to peace, the Peace Palace, and the successful Make Friends Across Religions campaign the initiative will implement a broad vision of interfaith understanding, friendship and collaboration. This vision is broken down into individual programmatic tracks, through which we aim to build bridges by bringing together communities of faith in the spirit of friendship. These include:

- An international summit at the highest level at the Peace Palace
- Declaration of Friendship by the religious leaders
- Campaign to promote worldwide support for the Declaration of Friendship
- Global consultations of religious leaders related to the Friendship Declaration and Summit and the establishment of long term networks in key cities to implement the vision of the declaration.

The 26th of September saw the launch of the new initiative. The initiative received extensive coverage in Holland, and in Spanish, Portugese and English speaking media in many countries.

Mark Woerde, founder of Lemz advertising agency, who initiated the "Make Friends" campaign said:

" We are very honoured to pass on the torch today to the Carnegie Foundation that owns the Peace Palace and the Elijah Interfaith Institute to take this initiative to the next level. I am grateful that last year's video appeal could be the trailer of something bigger and more impactful than what I could have foreseen; the spiritual leaders being invited to actually come together at The Peace Palace. It is the dream that we can all be one family and my hope is that our family name will be Compassion. Handing over the keys to the new parties can make this dream come true."

Alon Goshen-Gottstein offered the following concise summary for the goal of the initiative:

"Spreading friendship holds the promise of deepening mutual insight and wisdom, and generating

love and justice, joy and peace."

Asked by media how this declaration will be different than many other declarations, Alon replied: we have here the coming together of 3 bodies, each of which brings its own unique contribution. Elijah Institute brings its affiliation with leaders and its ability to convene a thinking process leading up to the declaration; The Peace Palace provides international visibility to the initiative; Havas-Lemz will facilitate an international global outreach campaign, through its more than hundred offices worldwide, through which the Friendship Declaration will become a truly global event. In addition, we consider the declaration a beginning, not an end. Based on it and in preparation for it, we seek to develop networks of religious leaders worldwide who will implement a program of study and friendship, thereby providing sustainability for the initiative.

BACKGROUND

About The Peace Palace

The Peace Palace in The Hague is the international icon of Peace and Justice. The prestigious institutions at the Peace Palace work on a daily basis towards peace through law. By means of international law, conflicts are prevented or settled peacefully. Owner of the Peace Palace is the Carnegie Foundation.

The palace houses the only principal organ of the United Nations outside of New York, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which aims to prevent war between states by applying international law. The palace also houses the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) that arbitrates many conflicts between different parties, such as states, companies and other organisations.

These international Courts and the many international organisations in The Hague - the International City of Peace and Justice - are all supported by the Peace Palace Library. The library of the Peace Palace is the largest and oldest library in the field of international law and peace in the world.

The Library also supports The Hague Academy of International Law, that is housed in the palace as well. The Hague Academy educates more than 600 students, young diplomats and legal professionals every year. The Academy is recognised by the General Assembly of the U.N. for its important contributions to international law, thus promoting peaceful relations. Providing a home for these important international institutions, the Peace Palace is and remains the beating heart of peace and justice in the world. www.peacepalace.org

About The Carnegie Foundation - Peace Palace

The owner of the Peace Palace is the Carnegie Foundation. At the heart of the mission of the foundation are the values promoted by the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who donated the capital to build the Peace Palace. Carnegie envisaged peace and ethics in international affairs, and to this end he supported education, science, culture and numerous projects. The Carnegie

Foundation maintains the magnificent cultural heritage of the Peace Palace and promotes its role as the global icon of peace and justice. The foundation is facilitating the important Courts in the palace and The Hague Academy of International Law, also by providing and managing the Peace Palace Library.

In doing so, the Carnegie Foundation is actively supporting the use of international law to settle conflicts peacefully. The foundation also provides education and organises public events at the Peace Palace that promote dialogue on the root causes of conflicts.

About Havas Lemz

The Amsterdam-based creative agency Lemz was founded in 2000 on the core belief that brands have a huge opportunity to engage with society in an honest and meaningful way. The agency recently became part of the Havas Group that employs 20,000 people in over 100 countries. The Havas Group is committed to being the world's best company at creating meaningful connections between people and brands through creativity, media and innovation. The agency with its team of 70 digital natives was recognized at the Cannes Festival of Creativity as the 2nd best independent agency in the world, in particular for its globally acclaimed Sweetie campaign, against online child abuse. www.havaslemz.com

The initiative will engage additional partners, especially the VU (Free University of Amsterdam)

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