

## IPG Dedication Speech – Puerto Vallarta Botanical Garden

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear Honored Guests

The International Peace Garden Foundation travels the world fostering the ideals of peace, reconciliation, tolerance, justice and respect. We search to transform our everyday world into a compassionate family free of racism, hatred, violence and misunderstanding. We just happen to use flowers as our instrument for this mission.

It is only fitting that we stand here in the Vallarta Botanical Garden at the approach to the new interfaith chapel among the most delicate and beautiful flowers in the world as the site of the 2017 International Peace Garden. Puerto Vallarta is known to be a leader in Mexico for respecting diversity of cultures and human rights and I stand here today as a witness to the widely held belief the Botanical Garden of Vallarta is a place of calm, comfort and healing of body, mind and spirit. What a perfect combination to convey our message of world peace.

But it is not only Puerto Vallarta and Cabo Corrientes being honored today. Our practice is to honor the entire country, as there is only one International Peace Garden per nation. Mexico was a unanimous decision by our distinguished board. In its 61 yrs. as a founding member of the United Nations, Mexico has made substantial contributions to the UN in areas such as peaceful settlement of disputes, struggle against apartheid, promotion of disarmament & halting climate change. It has resorted at different stages of its history to the peaceful solution of controversies. Mexico has a long tradition of asylum and refuge as it works toward the global compact for orderly, safe and regular migration for refugees with a focus on social inclusion which eradicates intolerance, prejudice and racism.

And let us not forget the flowers. Mexico is one of 17 countries in the world that are mega diverse when it comes to flora and fauna being home to 26,000 species of flora. It stands 2<sup>nd</sup> to world ecosystems with 34 unaltered ecosystems, 17 sanctuaries and protected areas for flora and fauna. We celebrate the bio-richness of this country. We commend Mexico's commitment to the preservation & conservation of its coastal ecosystems including the preservation of its seven species of sea turtles laying their eggs on Mexican shores. Mexico is a place of endless fascination. It's a place of culture, history and great historic achievements.

The IPGF is a charitable organization established to advance global friendship through the creation of worldwide Peace Gardens. Since 1990, beginning with Canada, our peace gardens span five continents. Our story and its longevity was inspired by a gift of tulips given in gratitude by the Dutch Royal Family who was given safe harbor in Canada during WW II. The gift of tulips is a tradition that continues to this day.

We and all of us here today desire to make this world a kinder, gentler place for our children and future generations to live in, a world filled with opportunities that promote higher living standards and social progress. Our foundation is not political, we do not represent any government, religion or philosophy.

We are completely volunteer driven with no financial endowments. We are passionate private citizens who condemn injustices toward humanity and human suffering caused by wars. We have a deep reverence for the preservation of our planet. We believe that linking person to person, country to country, we can be a constructive force in fostering a more peaceful world.

Our spirit is strong and we continue to accomplish our goals in a quiet, gentle manner that reflects the delicate nature and fragility of peace.

American author Marianne Williamson wrote *"Our power doesn't lie in our resume or our connections. Our power doesn't lie in what we've done or even in what we're doing. Our power lies in our clarity about why we're on the earth. We'll be important players if we think that way. And the important players of the coming years will be the people who see themselves as here to contribute to the healing of the world"*.

In conclusion I would like to share this peace prayer with you

Dear God, we pray to you,  
For people in all the world,  
For other nations,  
For other races,  
For people who think differently  
And live differently,  
Help us to respect, understand  
And love each other.  
Let there be no hate among nations.  
Forgive all injustice,  
Let wars end.  
Let your message be  
Proclaimed everywhere.  
Give us peace.  
Amen

We are so proud to gift this permanent stone marker to mark the site of this Peace Garden. The inscription reads *"Let the seeds of peace begin here and spread through out the world"*.

Thank you and may God Bless Us All.