



**NIWANO**  
PEACE FOUNDATION

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Adyan Foundation in Lebanon to receive the Niwano Peace Prize

***This year, the 35<sup>th</sup> Niwano Peace Prize will be awarded to the Adyan Foundation, whose mission is to strengthen citizenship and coexistence in diverse societies, and to create contexts and platforms for interfaith spiritual solidarity. The five founders of Adyan in 2006, Fadi Daou, Nayla Tabbara, Mireille Matar, Tony Sawma, and Samah Halwany, are followers of different denominations of Christianity and Islam and have varying professional expertise; their unity within their diversity has been Adyan's strongest asset. Notably, the organisation developed the Building Resilience and Reconciliation programme for children and educators, which offers a guide to peace and reconciliation for those affected by the Syrian war; this program was qualified by the UN Special envoy for global education, Gordon Brown, as being the real antidote to ISIS. The Niwano Peace Foundation wishes to commend and support Adyan's continued service to global peace-building by awarding it the 35<sup>th</sup> Niwano Peace Prize.***

The presentation ceremony will take place in Tokyo, Japan, on Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 a.m. In addition to an award certificate, Adyan Foundation's representatives will receive a medal and twenty million yen.

To avoid undue emphasis on any particular religion or region, every year the Peace Foundation solicits nominations from people of recognized intellectual and religious stature around the world. In the nomination process, some 600 people and organizations, representing 125 countries and many religions, are asked to propose candidates. Nominations are rigorously screened by the Niwano Peace Prize International Selection Committee, which was set up in May of 2003 on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Niwano Peace Prize. The Committee presently consists of ten religious leaders from various parts of the world, all of whom are involved in movements for peace and inter-religious cooperation.

Here are some comments by members of the Committee on the selection of Adyan Foundation for this year's award:

- Extremely positive from various perspectives including: interreligious roots (founders from 5 denominations); the valuing of religious diversity in

promoting peace and social justice; interfaith networks focus on education and high level preparation; concrete projects in partnership with Lebanese Ministry of Education, etc. (by J. Povilus)

- This organization has been a visible and committed actor for peace in Lebanon and the broader region, with a good reputation. They have focused on both high level and grassroots engagement, demonstrating the inclusive and interfaith values/principles the Niwano Award seeks to recognize. (by S. Hayward)
- Given that this part of the world is subject to so much strife and conflict, projects there need our attention. This project has successfully fostered peace projects across faith communities. Whilst promoting peace amidst secular realities, the project acknowledges religion and spiritual paths to reach those ends. (by S. Joseph)
- With a huge rise of extremism and risk of possible increase of conflicts in the Middle East, Adyan Foundation has contributed a lot in Interreligious studies and spiritual solidarity. It's work has given good lessons and examples for others to follow on co-existence and interfaith solidarity. Also, Adyan Foundation deserves the 35th Niwano Peace Prize. (by AHN Jae Woong)

#### The Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Foundation established the Niwano Peace Prize to honor and encourage individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to inter-religious cooperation, thereby furthering the cause of world peace, and to make their achievements known as widely as possible. The Foundation hopes in this way both to enhance inter-religious understanding and cooperation and to encourage the emergence of still more persons devoted to working for world peace.

The Prize is named in honor of the founder and first president of the lay Buddhist organization Rissho Kosei-kai, Nikkyo Niwano. For Niwano, peace was not merely an absence of conflict among nations, but a dynamic harmony in the inner lives of people as well as in our communities, nations and the world. Seeing peace as the goal of Buddhism, Niwano devoted much of the latter half of his life to promoting world peace, especially through inter-religious discussion and cooperation.

Past Niwano Peace Prize recipients are:

1. Archbishop Hélder P. Câmara (1983)
2. Dr. Homer A. Jack (1984)
3. Mr. Zhao Puchu (1985)
4. Dr. Philip A. Potter (1986)
5. The World Muslim Congress (1987)

6. Rev. Etai Yamada (1989)
7. Mr. Norman Cousins (1990)
8. Dr. Hildegard Goss-Mayr (1991)
9. Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne (1992)
10. Neve Shalom/ Wahat al-Salam (1993)
11. Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns (1994)
12. Dr. M. Aram (1995)
13. Ms. Marii K. Hasegawa (1996)
14. The Corrymeela Community (1997)
15. Ven. Maha Ghosananda (1998)
16. The Community of Sant'Egidio (1999)
17. Dr. Kang Won Yong (2000)
18. Rev. Abuna Elias Chacour (2001)
19. Rev. Samuel Ruiz García (2002)
20. Dr. Priscilla Elworthy (2003)
21. The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (2004)
22. Dr. Hans Küng (2005)
23. Rabbis for Human Rights (2006)
24. Dharma Master Cheng Yen (2007)
25. His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal (2008)
26. Rev. Canon Gideon Baguma Byamugisha (2009)
27. Ms. Ela Ramesh Bhatt (2010)
28. Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa (2011)
29. Ms. Rosalina Tuyuc Velásquez (2012)
30. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Gunnar Stålsett (2013)
31. Ms. Dena Merriam (2014)
32. Pastor Esther Abimiku Ibanga (2015)
33. Centre for Peace Building and Reconciliation (2016)
34. Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan (2017)

#### The Niwano Peace Foundation

The Niwano Peace Foundation was chartered in 1978 to contribute to the realization of world peace and the enhancement of a culture of peace. The Foundation promotes research and other activities based on a religious spirit and serves the cause of peace in such fields as education, science, religion and philosophy. The Foundation's endowment of about 4.0 billion yen makes possible the Niwano Peace Prize and other activities such as grants, research projects, lectures, symposia, and international exchanges. The Niwano Peace Foundation is a government-recognized charitable organization.

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