

**28th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION
Sopot, Poland, 31 August – 4 September 2015**

OPENING CEREMONY

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION

Marshal of the Senate

Ministers,

Excellences

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives of civilian and military authorities in your various ranks and capacities, President of the associations of our host country, delegates, friends,

“None can speak more eloquently for peace than those who have fought in war”

This quote from Ralph Bunche, winner of Nobel Peace Prize, highlighted in the WVF Credo, will inspire our thoughts for this 28th General Assembly, which we are opening today in Sopot.

A General Assembly which coincides with the 65th anniversary of our World Federation and the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

The World Veterans Federation was shocked and deeply saddened by the death of its dear President Datuk Abdul Hamid Ibrahim last October. After the formal opening session we will honour his memory in the presence of his dear wife whom I greet respectfully and with great emotion.

Dear Minister, on behalf of the World Veterans Federation I wish to express our sincere thanks for the support you have given us in the preparation and organization of this Assembly and to thank all of your employees at the Office veterans and victims of oppression who have for months in close collaboration with our Secretariat, worked to ensure the success of our meeting in this beautiful region of Poland, which is full of memories and history.

65 years ago, a visionary team decided to unite their efforts to ensure that those who had experienced the sufferings of war, whether they fought side by side or against each other, could work together for a better world within the framework of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and thus contribute to healing the wounds of war by improving the quality of life of all its victims.

The WVF is now present on all five continents, in 96 countries through its associations that together represent over 40 million members, because unfortunately regional conflicts that develop in the world generate new veterans and new associations which the WVF welcomes according to its statutory criteria which require everyone to share the same values of equal rights and duties.

Veterans are often presented as individuals or groups focused on the past.

While we are of course committed to cultivating the memory of these painful episodes of our lives, especially to pay tribute to those of us who died alongside us on the fields of battle, however, and we demonstrate this through our actions in all fields of our business, our intention is to learn from the past to apply it to the present and the future.

Since its inception, the WVF has always been committed to working towards peace in the plural sense, for more security, freedom, solidarity, at the institutional level and that of public opinion.

It has had a leading role in applying internationally and in individual countries its methodological and pragmatic approach to situations and activities.

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It has thus contributed to the implementation of a comprehensive approach to the rehabilitation of war disabled and, more generally, people with disabilities through its concern with all aspects of the individual; physical, mental, professional and social, to enhance skills rather than point out the deficiencies.

Serious events that bloody the world through acts that shock the human conscience justify the mobilization of the worldwide community of veterans.

It is the role of this Assembly which will update the means of action of the World Veterans Federation to increase respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and continue on the path that must lead to a more just and fraternal world, a world of peace, freedom and solidarity.

Before concluding I would like to send a sign of friendship to our Honorary President Serge Wourgaft, who cannot be with us due to family obligations, but whom I know is united with us in thought. He has asked me to pass on his greetings to all of you.

I wish all of you distinguished delegates, a good and fruitful work in a calm and constructive climate.

I thank you.