

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Sunhak Peace Prize Honors Global Peacebuilders

Knut Holdhus
April 11, 2025



Dr. Thomas Walsh and the three 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize laureates at the award ceremony in Seoul, South Korea April 11, 2025

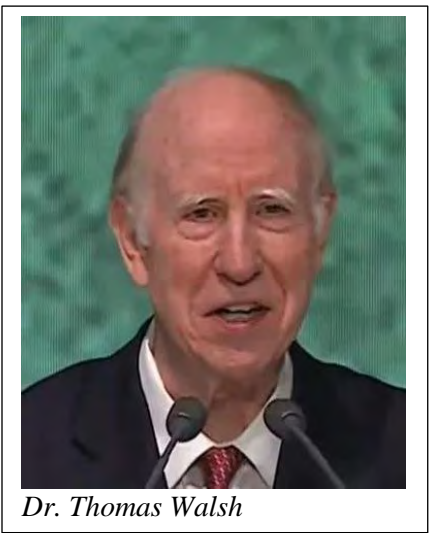


Sunhak Peace Prize celebrates visionaries of peace and progress at award ceremony in Seoul

The 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize Award Ceremony

The Award Ceremony for the 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize was held Friday, April 11, 2025, at the Crystal Ballroom of the Lotte Hotel World in Seoul, South Korea with 750 distinguished guests attending, including former and current heads of state, as well as prominent global leaders from approximately 100 countries.

Each of the three laureates received a medal, plaque, and a monetary award of USD 200,000. The winners of 2025 [Sunhak Peace Prize](#) were Wanjira Mathai, Hugh Evans, and Patrick Awuah Jr., in recognition of their impactful work in educational innovation, global citizenship, and environmental restoration.



Dr. Thomas Walsh

Wanjira Mathai, Managing Director for Africa and Global Partnerships at the World Resources Institute, headquartered in Washington DC, was honored for her exceptional leadership of the AFR100 initiative, which seeks to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land across Africa by 2030. She has also made notable contributions to environmental conservation through her involvement in the Green Belt Movement, co-founded with her mother, Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai, resulting in the planting of over 51 million trees.

Hugh Evans, co-founder of Global Citizen in Australia, was recognized for his efforts in raising \$43 billion to fight global poverty, providing critical social services to around 1.3 billion people in need.

Patrick Awuah Jr., founder of Ashesi University in Ghana, was celebrated for transforming higher education by fostering ethical leadership and advancing STEM education. His commitment to gender equity has also led to a 50% enrollment rate for women at the university.

According to José Manuel Barroso, Chair of the Sunhak Peace Prize Selection Committee, "These laureates have demonstrated significant, ongoing commitments to addressing critical global challenges. Their dedicated efforts reflect a vision of sustainable peace and human advancement."

The three laureates were given the prestigious prize by Dr. Thomas Walsh, President of HJ International Graduate School for Peace, and co-chair of the Sunhak Peace Prize Selection Committee. In his welcoming address, he said,

"As we know, peace does not become a reality automatically. It doesn't emerge naturally like a sunrise. It comes into being like any great work on the foundation of the investment of time, energy, creativity, guided by a moral and spiritual vision and requiring courage, resolve, conviction. Such work for peace will be on display throughout today's program.

The Sunhak Peace Prize was founded 10 years ago based on the remarkable vision and leadership of Dr. [Hak Ja Han Moon](#), in appreciation for the great work of her late husband, Reverend [Sun Myung Moon](#).

The principle that guides the Sunhak Peace Prize is that lasting peace can only be achieved when we transcend barriers that divide us and learn to respect each person's [God](#)-given dignity and value as a son or daughter of [God](#)."



In his congratulatory address, Dr. Ban Ki-moon, the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations and recipient of the 2020 Sunhak Peace Prize Special Founders Award, said,

"This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Sunhak Peace Prize, a significant milestone that highlights its enduring mission to recognize and share the inspiring stories of unsung heroes who tirelessly serve humanity's peace and prosperity. The achievements of this year's five laureates are truly profound. [...]

As former Secretary General, I tirelessly emphasized the global citizenship. In that respect, I'd like to express my gratitude Dr. [Hak Ja Han Moon](#), whose vision and commitment over the past decade have brought these remarkable individuals to global attention and

uniting them through international solidarity.

Dr. [Hak Ja Han Moon](#) established the Sunhak Peace Prize to realize the vision of one family, a world of peace. Her courageous founding of the prize in 2013, transcending nationalities, races, religions and cultures, reflects her lifelong dedication to lasting peace and human welfare. Her unwavering spirit of [true love](#) and role as the "Mother of Peace" continue to serve as an exemplary guide for this and future generations."



A second congratulatory message was delivered by Macky Sall, President of Senegal 2012-2024. He expressed,

"I'm very delighted to take the floor at this Sunhak Peace Prize Award ceremony. It is an honor and a duty of gratitude as a laureate of the fourth edition of the prize. My obligations at the time did not allow me to attend the ceremony. I therefore felt it was a duty to be visual for this summit.

I pay tribute to the late Reverend [Sun Myung Moon](#), the visionary behind the Universal Peace Federation. And I salute with respect the honorable [Mother Han Moon](#), who continues to serve the ideal of peace and human fraternity with generosity and commitment.



In a world exhausted by war, violence and all its harms, climate crisis and persistent inequalities, working together, working towards the ideal of peace and human fraternity is an act of faith, goodwill, courage and patience. This is what the 2025 Sunhak Prize laureates have demonstrated. [...]

In these challenging times, honoring those who strive for peace, development and human beings' dignity is more than a symbolic act. It is a moral imperative. That is precisely why we stand together here today. This prize not only recognizes the achievement of the laureates but also serves as an encouragement for all of us to

continue this work."

In her acceptance speech, Wanjira Mathai stated,

"What a profound privilege it is for me to stand here today accepting this award and joining the remarkable family of Sunhak Peace Prize laureates.

This moment really fills me with deep gratitude and humility to be recognized as by a prize that is dedicated to resolving worldwide suffering, conflict, poverty and environmental threats, and that is guided by a mission rooted in sustainability, conflict resolution and ecological conservation. [...]

To be recognized with the Sunhak Peace Prize during such turbulent times, particularly for my region in Africa and my country in Kenya, that faces such vulnerability is an incredible, incredible honor.

The vision set forth by [Reverend](#) and [Dr. Moon](#) of a peace built through collaboration and service and upliftment of the most vulnerable resonates very deeply for me."



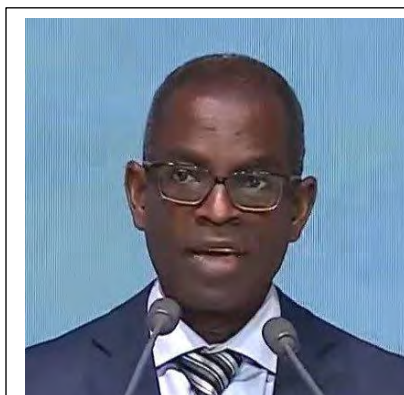
Hugh Evans with his Sunhak Peace prize medal April 11, 2025, in Seoul. Photo: Screenshot from live transmission by Peace TV.

Hugh Evans said in his acceptance speech,

"I accept the Sunhak Peace Prize with enormous gratitude. And I accept it on behalf of our team at Global Citizen, our partners and the artists and advocacy communities who selflessly help make all of our work possible. [...]

And while I've been passionate about ending extreme poverty all of my life, the founding principles of Global Citizen were inspired by the words of the late Nelson Mandela, who said in one of his final speeches in Trafalgar Square in 2005, he said that overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity, but an act of justice.

He said, like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings."



*Dr. Patrick Awuah speaking
April 11, 2025, in Seoul*

The third laureate, Dr. Patrick Awuah, said in his speech,

"What Korea's history, Ashesi's experience, and the spirit of the Sunhak Peace Prize teach us is that investing in youth, education and leadership, we create a ripple effect benefiting not just one country or region, but our entire global community.

Dr. [Hak Ja Han Moon](#) and all of you here today, thank you for your work to promote global peace and well-being. The work before us is enormous, and it will take patience, persistence and courage to succeed. Every step forward reminds us of how much further we still have to go, but also how achievable our goals are.

As Reverend [Sun Myung Moon](#) put it, the way for us to live is to rely on each other's love. We must give until all our selfishness

disappears. That is where peace comes from.

Thank you once again for this award. I will hold it, dear. And I accept it on behalf of the African youth whose potential shines a light for all of us."

At the award ceremony in Seoul, there were two more laureates, recipients of the 2025 Special Founders' Award - Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, President of Nigeria 2010-2015, and Dr. Samuel Radebe, founder of The Revelation Spiritual Home in South Africa. More about that in part 2.

To be continued. Part 2 coming soon.

Text: Knut Holdhus, written based on live transmission from Seoul

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Mother Moon’s Message On Achieving World Peace

• January 17, 2025 • Knut Holdhus

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Dr. Hak Ja Han’s message about achieving world peace as one family under God, given at press conference in Seoul 15th January 2025



From the press conference 15th Jan. 2025 at Korea Press Center, Seoul, where the 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize Laureates were announced. Photo: Screenshot from PeaceTV.


Message from Dr. [Hak Ja Han](#), founder of Sunhak Peace Prize, read by Yeon Ah Moon. at the press conference 15th January at the Korea

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Press Center, announcing the three recipients of the **2025 prize** and one recipient of the special Founders' Award. The actual award ceremony will be held 11th April in Seoul.

See also [Sunhak Peace Prize: Global Peacebuilders Honored](#)

Distinguished journalists from around the world, esteemed leaders who support the vision and values of the Sunhak Peace Prize.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for joining us on this significant occasion. It is with great joy that we announce the historic individuals who have been honored as recipients of the **sixth Sunhak Peace prize**, in celebration of its 10th anniversary.

I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to reflect on the meaningful journey, remarkable achievements and future vision of the Sunhak Peace Prize over the past decade.

In 2014, together with my late husband, Reverend Dr. **Sun Myung Moon**, I founded the Sunhak Peace Prize to solidify our lifelong vision and mission – the realization of a peaceful world as one family under **God**.

This vision is not a mere concept. It



From an earlier Sunhak Peace Prize award ceremony, in 2017, when Sakena Yacoobi, "Mother of Refugee Education", was awarded the prize by **Mother Moon**. Photo: Graeme Carmichael

encompasses concrete virtues and a philosophy of peace that all global citizens ought to share and practice, transcending race, nationality, religion, culture and time.

Historically, human civilization has been unable to break free from cycles of exclusion, conflict, confrontation and division.

Despite lofty rhetoric about peace, human-centered ideology and philosophies have only reinforced self-centeredness. Even today, at the midpoint of the 21st century, humanity faces countless urgent crises and challenges.

The wars and conflicts that continue to arise across the globe and disaster caused by environmental abuse, poverty and inequality, exacerbated by response to pandemics compel us to confront the fundamental questions about humanity's intrinsic values and purpose and how they can be rediscovered.

The vision and mission of the Sunhak Peace Prize are firmly centered on our Creator, **God**. The God I have come to know is our Heavenly Parent of harmony, unity and true love.

God created the universe and all life in pairs – male and female – according to **God's** divine principles. From minerals to higher beings, there is no creation on earth that exists outside the principles of **God's** creation.

Human beings created as male and female in **God's** image were designed as **God's** children and given a period of growth to reach maturity and fulfillment.

This means that humanity bears a responsibility and has been bestowed the extraordinary gift of ascending to the rim of the Creator's value.

Tragically, humanity failed to fulfill this responsibility. In Christian

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theology, this is described as the Fall. As a result, humanity lost sight of [God's essence](#) and values, leading to the severance of their [relationship with God](#).

This has caused human history to be dominated by male-centered, winner-centered and ruler-centered narratives.

For true peace to be established, we must recognize that [God](#) exists as both Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother – our Heavenly Parent – who created all life in duality. All creations are not independent entities achieving their purpose through conflict or opposition, but rather harmonious unions fulfilling each other in true love according to the principles of creation.



The Sunhak Peace Prize logo

This is why Sunhak Peace Prize advocates transcending human-centered ideologies and upholding ideals of one family under [God](#), centered on our Heavenly Parent.

Sunhak Peace Prize has steadfastly pursued the three pillars of respect for human rights, promoting reconciliation and preserving the environment.

Over the past decade, it has tirelessly sought out and honored individuals who have dedicated their lives to solving the world's most pressing challenges. Sharing and amplifying their extraordinary achievements and forward-looking visions globally, have been the great joy and pride of the Sunhak Peace Prize. To date, we have honored a total of 12 remarkable individuals as a symbol of world peace.

The announcement of the three new laureates and one recipient of the Founders' Special Honorary Award today will further illuminate universal values of peace that humanity strive to achieve.

As the Founder, I sincerely hope that each of you will become future champions of the Sunhak Peace Prize.

I look forward to the day when you come to understand and embrace the essence and values of our Heavenly Parent as a true Parent and become true children of [true love](#) and peace.

The Sunhak Peace Prize will continue to identify exemplary global leaders and expand the vision of peace rooted in love for humanity and the earth, ensuring a brighter future for all.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all who have joined us on this extraordinary journey toward true peace.

Just as a single drop of water flows into a river and eventually reaches the ocean, I ask for your continued interest and support so that the vision of Sunhak Peace Prize can be passed on to future generations.

May it promise a flourishing humanity, an enduring welfare and a hopeful future.

With these words, I conclude my welcoming address.

Thank you.

Transcribed from the simultaneous English translation provided at the press conference 15th January, slightly edited.

See also [Sunhak Peace Prize: Global Peacebuilders Honored](#)

Featured image above: Yeon Ah Moon reading [Mother Moon's](#) message at the press conference 15th Jan. 2025 at Korea Press Center, Seoul, where the 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize Laureates were announced. Photo: Screenshot from PeaceTV.

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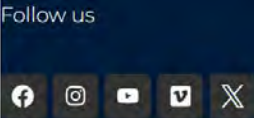
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