

Peaceful Reunification on the Korean Peninsula webinar with Dr. Hak Ja Han

Robin Marsh
April 30, 2021



"Toward a Peaceful Reunification on the Korean Peninsula: Creating the Foundation for a Unified World" Opening Session

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) Europe and the Middle East, as part of a global series of webinars over the coming days to highlight efforts for peaceful Korean reunification, just concluded their Opening Session, "Toward a Peaceful

Reunification on the Korean Peninsula: Creating the Foundation for a Unified World". While considering perspectives on the Korean geo-political situation, the session featured the soon to be inaugurated Think Tank 2022 that will draw upon experts from around the world from various sectors to focus on particular aspects of Korean reunification. Keynote speakers included Senator Pier Ferdinando Casini and Dr Claude Béglé with recorded contributions from Dr. Thomas G. Walsh and UPF Co-Founder, Dr Hak Ja Han Moon. UPF Europe and the Middle East will showcase eight further sessions over the next three days, some in partnership with UPF Japan. Further details can be seen from this [link](#).

That these sessions began with invocations from Reverend Cannon Ann Easter, former Chaplain to HRH Queen Elizabeth II, and Sheikh Mohamad Ali Al-Haj Al-Amili, Imam, As-Sajjad Seminary, Lebanon reflects the UPF approach that peace-making efforts must be rooted in Godly values.

Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, Chair, UPF Europe and Middle East highlighted the motivation underlying the webinars that have been convened simultaneously in five different continents of the world. The co-founders of UPF, Dr. and Mrs. Moon visited North Korea to open a channel for dialogue with mutual respect between the North and South in December 1991. These webinars are a way to commemorate the UPF founders' visit to NK thirty years ago and to lay a foundation to launch Think Tank 2022. This will consist of multiple expert working groups exploring peace on the Korean peninsula by examining, for example, how valuable Europe's role could be in helping to facilitate reunification.

A keynote speech by Italian Senator Pier Ferdinando Casini, who was the Former President of the National Assembly and is the Honorary Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, explained that the issue of Korean reunification is an example of the tension between political pragmatism and utopianism. While politics is rooted in 'realism and concreteness' it feeds on the utopian dreams like the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.

He identified this tension in the hope of the historic summit of South and North Korean leaders in Panmunjon, DMZ in April 2018 but also in the pragmatism that extinguished those hopes.

Senator Cassini affirms that 'if reunification in a political sense appears today as a dream, a convergence of interests that makes the policies of the two countries head as much as possible towards the same direction does not seem to be impossible.'

He found a role for the UPF focus on support for peaceful Korean reunification to strengthen 'a spirit of collaboration between the two Koreas, in the awareness that it will be the most profitable political investment in view of resolving regional crises and building world peace.'

Dr Béglé, an entrepreneur and former Swiss MP who has visited North Korea, expressed that the problem is not just between Seoul and Pyongyang. These nations fall between the tension of the two geo-political camps led by China and the United States who are striving for hegemony. The Korean peninsula is a buffer between these two camps. He saw that both South Korea and North Korea have pride in their achievements. The North Korean nation has pride in overcoming severe sanctions to develop their own consumer market as well as nuclear weapons. He has experienced similarities between the people of the two nations because 'Koreans are Koreans'. They are both hard working and strive for excellence.

'People have to accept that the situation is not black or white, to acknowledge that they also made mistakes, as it happens in the process of transitional justice. They have to learn to forgive each other, as Germany and France managed to do overtime, allowing so for the European construction. Europe by the way could share with the Koreans that experience of a real reconciliation after two successive horrible wars.'

The Opening Session also highlighted a UPF initiative of its co-founder, Dr Hak Ja Han Moon, the highly successful Rally of Hope by showing a compilation video of the five programmes so far. Featuring speakers such as H.E. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary General of the UN, Nobel Laureates such as H.E. F.W. de Klerk and World Food Programme CEO David Beasley, the co-inventor of the Oxford University's Covid 19 vaccine, Professor Sarah Gilbert and former EU Commissioner, Jose Manuel Barroso, the video heralds the sixth Rally of Hope on May 9th. Mr Jacques Marion, the Moderator for the session, reminded the audience that the "6th Rally of Hope will conclude our ILC 2021 Conference with the launch of a global working group of experts called "Think Thank 2022", which will focus on the issue of peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula."

In that theme Dr Thomas Walsh, UPF International Chairman, in his recorded message, emphasised that there is a strong strategic plan to focus on moving the Korean peninsula toward peace. To that end there have been 120 UPF webinars over the last three months leading up to these international webinars. This network of experts across the world will link to the 8 associations within UPF and their peace efforts will be undertaken in a multi-sectoral manner. Fact finding missions will also occur, once the pandemic allows, with high level delegations visiting key stakeholder nations.

Dr Walsh further outlined UPF plans explaining that a World Summit will take place, hopefully in November 2021, the 30th anniversary of the UPF co-founders visit to North Korea in November 1991, but if not in the Spring of 2022, gathering all the expert working groups from around the world in Seoul.

Dr Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founder of UPF, spoke of the Korean war and the miracle that 16 UN member nations came forward to support South Korea in that war. Tearfully referring to those soldiers, many of whom were still in their teens, as heroes of the providence, Dr Moon said she was determined that they will not be forgotten. Many of those veterans, now in their 90's, expressed that they wanted to see a peacefully united Korea. Dr Moon expressed her desire to see that each of those contributing nations has a monument on which those fallen soldiers names are inscribed.

With that emotion fresh in the audience's mind the session concluded, outlining the programme of webinars to come, following this structure of the eight UPF associations endeavoring to promote the dream of Korean unification with sufficient realism for it to be permanent.