

## UPF's 32 International Leadership Conference: Responsibility of Parliamentarians

William Selig  
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**Seoul, Korea** -- The 32nd International Leadership Conference organized by UPF brought together more than 300 leaders from over 80 nations.

The ILC was held at the Lotte Hotel World from August 26 to 29, 2018, under the theme "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Responsibility of Parliamentarians and Religious Leaders."

The select group of international participants included many current parliamentarians, along with religious leaders and civil society leaders.

### Introduction

In the search for innovative solutions to the world's problems, and with an aim to exploring and underscoring the role and responsibility of parliamentarians and religious leaders, experts and discussants shared their wisdom and experience on topics related to the general theme.

Beginning with the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, issues included extremist ideologies and terrorism, religious conflicts, violence against women and children, human trafficking, drug trade, human rights violations, climate change, Middle East and the South China Sea. To deal with these and other serious challenges, the parliamentarians and religious leaders agreed to work together and build a global network of individuals and organizations dedicated to world peace.

### Highlights

UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon invited the ILC participants to be guests of honor at a World Peace Blessing and a special commemoration of the sixth anniversary of the passing of her husband, the Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon.

Based on the UPF co-founders' proposal for a worldwide interreligious structure in the United Nations, a member of South America's Mercosur Parliament proposed the creation of an interreligious forum to "promote a culture of peace, working together from the interreligious field, in pursuit of the construction of a more plural, mature and respectful society of differences."

In addition to the many distinguished guests from around the world, this ILC had the participation of **Chief Mandla Mandela**, chief of the Mvezo Traditional Council and a member of the Parliament of South Africa. Chief Mandela said he is very pleased with UPF and its activities in Africa. He spoke about the next Africa Summit, to be co-hosted jointly by the Royal House of Mandela and UPF later this year in Cape Town, South Africa. The South African president has been invited to be the keynote speaker at the opening ceremony, along with other heads of state.

The chief fondly recalled his grandfather Nelson Mandela, the late South African president and Nobel

Peace Prize laureate, and his life of service and sacrifice. He said that Africa has much to offer the world, "but much to heal, following centuries of colonialization and the struggles of our young democracies."

Quoting his grandfather, Chief Mandela said, "Peace is not just the absence of conflict; peace is the creation of an environment where all can flourish regardless of race, creed, religion, gender, class, caste or any other social markers of difference."



### Opening Banquet

The master of ceremonies for the opening banquet, held on August 26, was **Rev. Gregory Stone**, the UPF regional secretary general for Oceania.

**Dr. Gwang Seuk Song**, the president of UPF-Korea, gave the welcoming remarks. He commented on the amazing changes that have occurred on the Korean Peninsula in the past year and said, "It did not happen suddenly or just through the efforts of the Korean government." He credited the international community and, in particular, UPF International and *The Washington Times*.

**Dr. Thomas G. Walsh**, the chair of UPF International, gave the opening remarks. He acknowledged the presence of Dr. Hyun Young Lee and a delegation of 50 leaders of the Korea Religions Association. He described the three pillars through which UPF is working to bring peace and development: the world's religious faiths, governments and international NGOs, and the marriage-and-family movement. Dr. Walsh said this has been an incredible year of growth and development for UPF and cited the Africa Summit in Senegal, the ILC in Austria, and the Latin America Summit in Brazil. Plans are under way for the next Africa Summit to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, and an Asia-Pacific summit in Kathmandu, Nepal, as well as other major programs in Japan and the United States and, in February 2019, the Sunhak Peace Prize event in Korea.

**Archbishop George Augustus Stallings Jr.**, the national co-chair of the American Clergy Leadership Conference, gave the invocation, offering a heartfelt prayer for good government and for our Creator to "instill in all of us the desire to serve and not be served, to live for the sake of others, and for the peaceful unification of North and South Korea." After a toast for peace by the master of ceremonies and a stellar performance by the tenor Mr. Seung Il Kim, there were three after-dinner speakers.

**Hon. Bhubaneswar Kalita**, a member of India's parliament, called on the participants to see the conference not with ordinary eyes but "to open up your spiritual eyes and try to feel the divine ordinance for unfolding the historical incidents taking place in the Korean Peninsula." He recalled the prophetic poem written by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore: "In the Golden Age of Asia, Korea was one of the lamp-bearers. That lamp awaits to be lighted once again for the illumination of the East." Hon. Kalita said that light has reappeared, according to prophesy, in "the idea and vision of Father and Mother Moon, who are profoundly called the True Parents."

**Ms. Asmaa Kftarou** of the UN Commission for Syria, United Arab Emirates, invited the participants to stand to memorialize the passing of both Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and her grandfather Sheikh Ahmed Kufaro, the grand mufti of Syria. She praised Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon as "the true mother of the big heart" for hosting the international conference. She recalled when her grandfather met with Father Moon almost 30 years ago. "When I saw their hearts come together, their spirits came together for the sake of humanity. They started to do great things between Islam and other religions. My heart was deeply moved,

and my life course was set."

**Sheikh Mansour Diouf**, co-chair of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) for Africa, Senegal, said: "Rev. and Mrs. Moon don't just say, 'We wish you peace'; they really live by that." He described their humility, openness, courage and generosity. "They treat everyone as members of their own family. ... Courage can only come from when you have a mission from God. ... When you are courageous, you never let go. Father Moon never let go, never dropped his hands. That's what allowed him to unite all these wonderful people around him." Sheikh Diouf said we must learn from the Moon family, and he called on the political and religious leaders to "bring this work of Father and Mother Moon to the United Nations and the Islamic conference [Organization of Islamic Cooperation]." He closed by saying, "Peace is possible if we bring it together, if we are united together, and if our voices resonate together."



## Plenary sessions

### Session I: The Vision and Work of UPF, IAPP and IAPD

Moderator: **Ms. Genie Kagawa**, director of the Executive Office of UPF International

#### Speakers:

Vision and Principles: **Mr. Jacques Marion**, UPF regional vice president for Europe

International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP): **Dr. Charles S. Yang**, UPF regional president for Central America and the Caribbean

Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD): **Mr. David Fraser Harris**, UPF regional secretary general for the Middle East

UN Relations: **Dr. Tageldin Hamad**, vice president and director, Office of United Nations Relations, UPF International

Marriage and Family: **Ms. Lynn Walsh**, director, Office of Marriage and Family, UPF International

#### Commentator:

**Hon. Chitrallekha Yadav**, deputy speaker of Parliament (2000) and minister of education (2014-2015), Nepal, expressed warm admiration for UPF and recalled the founders' visit to Nepal. Those were difficult times in her country, she said, but "Rev. Moon brought a higher vision to the political leaders and predicted that peace would come – peace came shortly afterwards." Through the application of UPF's principles of peace, lasting peace on earth can come, she said.



## **Session II: Peace, Development and the Role of Parliamentarians: Challenges Facing the Korean Peninsula**

**Moderator:** **Mr. Thomas P. McDevitt**, chair of *The Washington Times*

### Speakers:

**Hon. Dan Burton**, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1983-2013) and international co-chair of IAPP, said: "If we want world peace, we need to have people who are willing to speak out. Everyone has a role to play." IAPP is designed to bring parliamentarians together and raise the public's awareness of the importance of peace in the nuclear age, he said. "It would take only one mistake to have a world holocaust, and that is why the parliamentarians must work out differences peacefully. Where there are tyrants, we have to unite and put pressure on them to bring about positive change. We cannot accept war." IAPP now has more than 3,000 members in 80 nations. "We must get the message out to the UN and the nations that we must bring peace to the world before it's too late," he said.

**Hon. John Doolittle**, member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1991-2009), noted the collaborative efforts by parliamentarians from South Korea, Japan and the United States for denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The congressman pointed out that real leadership involves risk and commended U.S. President Donald Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in and their meetings with North Korean President Kim Jong-un. "It was a vital first step and application of real leadership. Secondly, peace comes through strength, not through projection of weakness." He quoted Virgil, the ancient Roman poet: "Fortune favors the bold"; Winston Churchill: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts"; and Edward Everett Hale, former chaplain of the U.S. Senate: "I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

**Hon. Jose de Venecia Jr.**, five-time speaker of the House of Representatives, Philippines, and the international co-chair of IAPP, acknowledged the key players, including the leaders of the two Koreas, the United States, and Amb. Chung Eui-yong, the former secretary general of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties and currently the national security adviser to the president of South Korea. The speaker said he believes that "North Korea could leverage and give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for large-scale cash, economic assistance, investments and trade, rapidly build up its economy, and eventually be equal in status as sovereigns with South Korea although the North has a much lesser population." Hon. de Venecia said he is optimistic that we are on the verge of "the dawning of peace among the peoples of North and South Korea, perhaps leading to a confederation between North and South."

**Hon. Andrey Svintsov**, the deputy chair of the State Duma Committee for Information Policy, Russia, said, "Russia has proposed a solution based on collective efforts and dialogue." He reported that after the leaders of North and South Korea met in Panmunjom, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the president of South Korea, clarifying that Russia is ready "to promote cooperation between North and South Korea." President Putin stressed that "Russia is ready to help with the tripartite infrastructure and energy projects of the Korean Peninsula," Hon. Svintsov said. He referred to Russia-South Korea "infrastructure projects that will connect the North and South of the Korean Peninsula, the construction of a gas pipeline and a railway, and issues of trade and economic cooperation." He said he supports the role of parliamentarians to "ensure peace, stability and economic growth."

**Hon. Jong Seong Lim**, a member of South Korea's National Assembly, noted the new opportunities for peace that have opened up since the 2018 Winter Olympic Games at PyeongChang. North and South Korea agreed to hold an inter-Korea summit in Pyongyang in September -- the third meeting between the leaders of the two Koreas. Hon. Lim said he is optimistic that these talks will lead to the denuclearization of the peninsula and the formal end of the Korean War. He said that South Korea's President Moon has proposed the construction of an "East Asian Railway Community Initiative" that would involve the six countries of Northeast Asia -- South Korea, North Korea, China, Japan, Russia and Mongolia -- in addition to the United States. President Moon announced plans to establish a unified economic zone in the border region between the two countries. Hon. Lim called on the ILC participants to support these efforts "in order to overcome the Cold War system and to go the path of peace and unification."

**Hon. Kiyoshi Ejima**, a member of Japan's House of Councilors, the upper house of the National Diet, made several suggestions on the role of parliamentarians. First, he stressed the importance of the Korean Peninsula and its impact on Japan and Asia. Second, he spoke of the urgent need for North and South Korea to move toward peaceful unification. Before there can be progress in these areas, he said, there must be some resolution on "the abduction cases as well as nuclear and missile development." He also called attention to the construction of the Japan-Korea Undersea Tunnel, which will foster better relations between the nations.

**Dr. Alexandre Mansourov**, an adjunct professor of security studies at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service in Washington, D.C., described North Korea as "China's problem and not Russia's concern." He said that Russia's trade with North Korea is minuscule, but North Korea can be a valuable card in President Putin's bargaining with the Trump administration. Any conflict between the United States and China over Korea would benefit Russia, he said, because it would weaken both sides and drain their resources; divert U.S. attention from Ukraine and the Middle East; and probably alleviate U.S. pressure on Russia in other parts of the post-Soviet space. In addition, he said, it would compel Beijing to be more responsive to Moscow's diplomatic needs, more supportive of Russian activities in the Crimea, and more reasonable and flexible in economic negotiations. He said that the prospect of a nuclear war in Korea, "albeit horrifying on humanitarian grounds," doesn't really scare off Moscow, because the peninsula is located very far away from Russia's main population. Moscow supports sanctions against North Korea, he said. By cooperating on the nuclear issue, the Kremlin wants Washington to recognize that Russia is a global player whose support is needed to resolve the Korean problem, he said. "It can't be isolated or ignored, contrary to the U.S. efforts," he said.

**Ambassador Joseph R. DeTrani**, former U.S. special envoy to the Six Party Talks, addressed the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the changed relations since last year between the United States and North Korea. "Remember," he said, "Kim Jong-un came in as a 28-year-old leader not groomed for this position." Ambassador DeTrani said he believes North Korea's call for rapprochement is sincere. "Kim Jong-un doesn't have to prove himself. They have a nuclear deterrent and now want to focus on economic development." The ambassador said this is an area in which the West can help, but he expressed caution because a North Korea with nuclear weapons can send a message to Japan or Taiwan "that maybe you need to seek nuclear weapons, but then we could face nuclear proliferation." The ambassador said we must continue toward complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization in exchange for economic reform to get security assurances and investments. "We must be united in our position and work together to help Kim make that final step toward dismantlement. I am guardedly optimistic. We are at the cusp, a reflection point. We can move forward but as a team. The dialogue must open up. It's a regional and global issue."



### Session III: Peace, Development and the Role of Parliamentarians (Part 2)

Moderator: **Dr. Paterne Zinsou**, UPF regional secretary general for West Africa

Speakers:

**H.E. Dioncounda Traoré**, the president of Mali (2012-2013), thanked the organizers and co-founder Rev. Moon, whom he called "the well-inspired architect of the world-house." Now that the foundation has been laid, he said, "It is our responsibility to continue to build the common home, brick by brick, landing in stages." There are many challenges facing our world and the special role of parliamentarians, he said. "It is up to the politician to work with the social structure and guarantee the needs of the citizens." He expressed his support for the actions taken by his government's parliament to send troops to fight Islamist rebels (Tuaregs want independence from Mali), as well as missions initiated by the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations. He called it "parliamentary diplomacy." President Traoré concluded by saying that "a parliamentary component [is] an extremely effective instrument in the fight for peace and solidarity."

**Hon. Agung Laksono**, the speaker of Indonesia's House of Representatives (2004-2009), acknowledged the difficulty of achieving growth and development if there are conflicts in a country. He cited Palestine, Syria, Yemen and the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar. The greatest challenge to Indonesia, he said, is terrorism, which threatens the society and hinders progress, he said. The Preamble of the Indonesian Constitution outlines five basic principles, called *Pancasila*, which are similar to UPF's Five Principles of Peace. He spoke about climate change, which is not limited to a single nation and must be dealt with regionally. "Conflict begins in the mind," he said. He called for further meetings to address the root cause of conflict and said that parliamentarians can play a role in mediating opposing views.

**Hon. Ramen Deka**, a senior member of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of India's Parliament, said that according to the sacred Hindu scripture Bhagavad Gita, "No man can know happiness without peace." Similarly, he said, every nation and city seeks peace. "Peace and development are two sides of the same coin, and they are directly proportional to each other," he said. The role of parliamentarians is to be a peacemaker at the local level because "violence arises when there is division and conflict." He closed by quoting the late South African president, Nelson Mandela: "Peace is the greatest weapon for development that any person can have."

**Hon. Cynthia Tarrago Diaz**, a congresswoman from Paraguay, spoke about the role of women in "protecting the seed of society." Although women have achieved progress in many fields, she pointed out that the positions available to women are limited compared to men. That is why the "United Nations has proposed to reach 50/50 participation by the year 2030, a figure that seems still very difficult to achieve." Due to the high degree of inequality in Latin America, women are being subjugated "to economic and psychological dependence, which often ends with physical violence against women and, in some occasions, in femicide." In Paraguay, she said, at least four women a month die at the hands of their partners. She called for awareness campaigns by churches and the media. World peace begins with safe families, she said. She called on the IAPP and the political leaders to lobby their governments and work for peaceful coexistence on the planet.

**Hon. Tinni Ousseini**, the president of the National Assembly of Niger, praised UPF and its recent upgraded designation as an NGO with general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. He described the critical challenges facing his own nation as the "persistence of all the sociocultural constraints that hinder its economic takeoff." Niger, at the beginning of the decade, saw a significant upswing in its level of prosperity, thanks to the discovery of oil and uranium reserves. However, these gains were lost due to an undeclared war on its borders. Hon. Ousseini said the role of the parliamentarian is "controlling government action and representing grass-roots citizens" and resolving differences by "giving priority to dialogue" for conflicts "such as interethnic differences, misunderstandings of religious origin, and distribution of crop or livestock lands." At the international level, he said, "the role of parliamentarians is to participate in peacebuilding."

**Hon. Vasilika Hysi**, the vice speaker of the Parliament of Albania, said her nation holds a strategic place for security and peace in the Balkans and Europe. It is a key link between East and West, she said. Peace, security and development translate as regional cooperation, "that is to say, good neighborhoods. Peace Road Balkans 2018 is being organized for October to bring young people and send a message of peace and reconciliation." The Parliament of Albania is dealing with many challenges, she said, including promotion of democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, and the fight against corruption. The biggest challenge is to meet the Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN 2030 Agenda. She said that because of its Ambassadors for Peace and the IAPP work with parliamentarians, UPF is "uniquely qualified to meet the Sustainable Development objectives and to strengthen cooperation and engagement in the region and globally."

**Dr. Oraib Al Rantawi**, the general director of the Al Quds Center for Political Studies in Jordan, said that religion is used as a weapon in the Middle East. The issue of human rights is not on the agenda. "It is a luxury to talk of such things." In the Middle East, only two out of 22 countries have free, inclusive elections, he said. "I'm amazed to hear in this crowd [people] who talk about their influence in the decision-making process in their countries. In the Middle East, it is not the same: The only job for parliaments is to approve and praise the wisdom of their governments. To come up with serious initiatives, to build peace, promote rights, minority, women rights – talking about the role of parliamentarians to tackle this heavy agenda is not an easy mission to talk about." He said there are places of hope where there are parliamentarians who are committed and willing to act for peace and security. "We need courageous leaders who are committed to the cause of people, peace, democracy."



#### **Session IV: Peace, Development and the Role of Religious Leaders**

Moderator: **Mr. David Fraser Harris**, UPF regional secretary general for the Middle East

Speakers:

**Dr. Hyun Young Lee**, president of the Korea Religions Association, recalled a quote from Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon: "Religions are like the river. They start as a small tributary, flow separately, but then come together into something far bigger, the ocean." Dr. Lee noted that eventually we all come together with God. He expressed gratitude to all the participants for coming together from around the world in the name of peace.

**Dr. Soo Man Kim**, president, Christian Theological College, Korea, explained that religious leaders must (1) pray for peace, (2) live a life of peace (3) repent, (4) educate believers about peace, (5) teach peace between religions during the process of training religious leaders, and (6) develop and supply educational materials to teach about peace.

**Archbishop George Augustus Stallings Jr.**, national co-chair of the American Clergy Leadership Conference, said, "Our role can only be understood in the context of identity, purpose and destiny." By identity, he referred to scripture, which describes us as children of God. Our purpose is to take ownership and control over the creation according to the Creator's will and intention, he said. "As God's manifest incarnate form on earth, we have failed miserably," he said. "We have become sidetracked by our own self-aggrandizement, materialism, racism, denominationalism, hedonism and sexism. We are separated as brothers and sisters and have failed to become one family of God." Our purpose is to be a bridge between God and humanity, he said, and to be spokespersons for God. We are called to stand together as one family under God. It is our destiny to be interrelated and interconnected, as Martin Luther King Jr. said: "In a real sense, all life is interrelated. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny." Archbishop Stallings said we must develop a culture of peace, but we must begin, as Michael Jackson sang, "with the man in the mirror."

**Dr. Viktor Ielenskyi**, a member of Ukraine's Verkhova Rada (Parliament), spoke about world religions. In "55 percent of the countries, governments use force toward religious groups," he said. He praised the

value of the great religious traditions. "In the eyes of God, [each has] a contribution which is totally unique." Dr. Ielenskiy said a key reason for the ILC is "to condemn weaponization of religions and sacralization of violence." He said he supports a strong and effective network of parliamentarians to defend religions, and he praised "the voices of prophets and preachers to defend peace and understanding between religions."

**Hon. Ahmed Al Jarwan**, the president of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace, United Arab Emirates, said, "The establishment of this conference and the many development trends in peace and tolerance in this peace-loving country are proof of South Korea's leadership and continued support for good and peace." He testified to his organization, the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace, which he said demonstrates the effectiveness of the world's parliamentarians, likewise, "the role of the world's religious leaders in promoting peace and tolerance is pivotal and paramount." It is the responsibility of religious leaders, he said, to convey the message of peaceful coexistence to our nations, "especially the youth and children." Lastly, he called for a "culture of order to restore peace."

**Mr. Pandit S.R. Tewarie**, the chaplain of the Sewa Dhaam Hindu Center, The Hague, Netherlands, spoke about the situation in prisons in the Netherlands and the value of spiritual and psychiatric care. "Peace," he said, "begins with God." Citing the *Vedic Sanskrit texts*, he said there is one God, but He is known by many different names, according to the many denominations or traditions. Pandit Tewarie raised the question, "What kind of peace do we seek?" He said, "True peace comes from within our hearts and soul."

**Mr. Jatinder Singh Birdi**, the chair of the Warwick District Faiths Forum, United Kingdom, said: "Everyone has a crucial role to perform, including parliamentarians, religious and faith leaders, for a world of peace. We all have a duty as human beings to look after and respect each other." Religious and faith leaders have a unique responsibility to "raise awareness of the issues within society," he said, citing domestic abuse and violence, forced marriage, alcohol, drugs, and knife and gun crimes. He called on *Waheguru*, the Almighty God, "to bless you to carry on performing the great work that you do and give you the courage and strength to continue and do more for peace and development of society."

**Dr. Jimly Asshiddiqie**, chair of the Constitutional Court (2003-2008) and of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association, Indonesia, praised UPF "as a premier peacebuilding organization [that] has put interfaith dialogue, respect and harmonious cooperation among all of the world's faith and religious traditions at the core of its peacebuilding initiatives." After listening to many of the presentations, he said he believes the problems facing the world "are related to the dynamic relation between religion and state politics," namely religious intolerance. He called on the leaders of both government and religions to work in partnership. "By the improvement of the mode of relationship, I believe, the process of peacebuilding will be more effective for the happiness for all mankind," he said.

**Bishop Kortu K. Brown**, president of the Liberia Council of Churches, Liberia, said: "Without peace there can be no development. Where there is conflict and war, peace will flee. Peace is like a king. He has to rule and be the president in charge. If you want development, we must have peace." The religious leader is "recognized as someone with authority. He is like the thermostat. He doesn't just know the temperature; he sets the temperature. Leaders of faith are representatives of God. We are God's people. We must maintain peaceful coexistence." When civil war broke out in Liberia 28 years ago, it was the religious leaders who developed the peace plan, he said. The religious leaders established the Inter Religious Council of Liberia still active after 28 years. "Religious leaders must emphasize our teachings of morality, one God, the creator of the universe. Religious leaders must promote religious tolerance." The bishop called on the religious leaders to "rise up to our calling."

**Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake**, chair of the board, International Shinto Studies Association, Japan, said that, first, religious leaders must educate themselves about other faiths, as lack of knowledge hinders any cooperative efforts. Second, it is important that religious leaders constantly dialogue with politicians. It is a mutually beneficial relationship, he said, since politicians need the votes of an educated constituency and likewise religious leaders can exercise their influence on politicians. Lastly, referring to "dictatorship states," such as China, North Korea and Syria, he said that it is important for religious leaders to take a strong position against dictatorships and any suppression of human rights.

## **Session V: UPF Areas of Work and Affiliated Organizations**

Moderator: **Rev. Franco Famularo**, president, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) of Canada

### Speakers:

Character Education: **Dr. Robert Kittel**, president, Youth and Students for Peace, Thailand

Peace Road: **Dr. Gwang Seuk Song**, president, UPF-Korea, and vice chair, World Peace Road



Foundation

Sunhak Peace Prize: **Mr. In Seog Nam**, secretary general, Sunhak Peace Prize Committee

Women's Federation for World Peace: **Ms. Carolyn Handschin**, UN Office director, WFWP International, Switzerland

FFWPU and World Peace Blessing: **Mrs. Ursula McLackland**, UPF regional secretary general for Asia



Commentator:

**Dr. Ida Odinga**, wife of the prime minister (2008-2013) of Kenya

#### **Session VI: Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Regional Perspectives**

Moderator: **Mr. Shunsuke Uotani**, deputy secretary general, UPF-Japan

Speakers:

**Hon. Humberto Benedetto**, member of the Mercosur Parliament, Argentina, explained that, based on Father Moon's proposal for a worldwide interreligious structure connected to the United Nations, it has been proposed to create an interreligious forum of Mercosur, the South American trade bloc. Its purpose would be to "promote a culture of peace, working together from the interreligious field, in pursuit of the construction of a more plural, mature and respectful society of differences." Whatever activities are undertaken by Mercosur in "economic, political, social and cultural matters should be complemented with the participation of religious structures and cultural expressions of their native peoples, since interreligious tolerance is part of our Latin American essence and is one of the characteristics that make peace among our peoples so successful in our region." He said this would be essential in dealing with the issues of immigration and refugee policies.

**Hon. Eddie Ng**, secretary of education (2012-2017), Hong Kong, gave an optimistic assessment of world affairs by describing the mutual benefits that will come from China's Belt and Road Initiative, the development project that will link China to Europe and Africa through land and sea routes. "It will help in the war against poverty, diseases, instead of among people," he said. China has a 100-year strategy to be the premier global superpower by 2049, he said. The former secretary of education said that children should be encouraged as early as possible to make goals and have a vision for their lives. Schools and teachers have an important role to provide the best curriculum and environment for learning and teaching critical and independent thinking. He praised the vision and activities of UPF because they "represent a harmonious blend of vision and action."

**Hon. Dr. Akram Hasson**, a member of Israel's Knesset, said, "There are many challenges facing Israel in the Middle East." He named Hezbollah in Lebanon, al-Qaeda in Syria, and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza. Dr. Hasson, who is a Druze (Arabic-speaking religious community in Israel), said there are 48,000 Druze who live in Israel and serve in the Israeli army and government. He said that he is close to Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the State of Palestine, and that he supports a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to the polls, he said, 67 percent of the Jewish people believe Israel needs to have peace with Palestine. "The only way to bring peace is to educate the young people to love each other. There are religious leaders in the Arab world who say God commands us to do bad things, but I don't think we need these religious leaders. We need religious leaders who will sacrifice for love. We need leaders who will take a stand against extremism and who will defend the rights of women and

children. We need to reach out to the Palestinian people with economic support and to educate the young people on both sides, not to hate, but to respect and love."

**Hon. Shyam Jaju**, national vice president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, India, said he believes peace comes through dialogue, cooperation and principled actions. This is not new for India, he said; rather, this is India's old heritage and working culture, which is described in the oldest scripture of the world, Rig Veda: "May all become happy, may all be free from illness, may all see what is auspicious, may no one suffer." Hon. Jaju said that this is the guiding principle of India and that Mahatma Gandhi narrated this philosophy and principles through his actions in leading India's independence movement. Hon. Jaju said that illiteracy is the root cause of all problems, and he ended on a note of optimism: "No matter how big, serious and complicated problems we are facing today, there is no reason to be afraid and lose hope. We have to work in the given situation collectively, cordially and subjectively. There is no metal that has no melting point." He called on parliamentarians and religious and civil society leaders to make a united effort to achieve these goals. "Organizations like Universal Peace Federation can play a very important role to that end," he said.

**Hon. Del Pilar Medina**, a congresswoman from Paraguay, said she works exclusively in the social sector with women who are heads of the household, which in Paraguay are 80 percent of the families. These women are in vulnerable situations. Paraguay is a conservative society. According to Hon. Medina, family is defined as instituted by God and consecrated by the National Constitution. As a Christian, she does not accept abortion. "I defend life from the moment of conception," she said. Recently Argentina rejected a bill to legalize abortion in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. She is concerned about the worldwide sexual abuse of children, girls and adolescents. Abuse is found in the church and in sports. "In my country an animal thief receives more condemnation than an abuser of children. We need to reform the constitution and the laws! As leaders, we have the obligation to pass tougher laws. These violations destroy the family, which is the center of society. As global citizens of peace, we must fight for the recovery of values for the family and ensure the physical, mental health of children and young people, who are the future leaders of the country. We must always defend the family unit, which is the nucleus of society, under the infinite love of God."

**H.E. Dr. Iqbal Alimohammed**, a former UN diplomat at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said, "We are gathered here because we are men and women who are committed to a safer world, in which all humanity can live in peace and dignity." In his work as a former UN official, he said he discovered that personal relationships are key to appreciating that people are "human beings first, despite all their quirks and proclivities." During many negotiations, it was this realization that was his personal "North Star [to help him] to transcend political biases and prejudices." He also recalled the final words of his mother-in-law: "The only thing that matters in life is love."



## Session VII: UPF World Summit Series: Reports

Moderator: **Mr. Adama Doumbia**, UPF regional secretary general for Africa

Speakers:

Latin America Summit: **Dr. Neudir Simão Feraboli**, UPF regional secretary general for South America

Asia Pacific Summit: **Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal**, minister of peace and reconstruction (2015-2016), Nepal

Africa Summit: **Sheikh Mansour Diouf**, Co-chair, IAPD Africa

**Chief Mandla Mandela**, chief of the Mvezo Traditional Council and a member of the Parliament of South Africa

### **Interfaith Prayer and Meditation**

Each day began with an interfaith prayer and meditation. Moderators included: **Mr. Krishna Adhikari**, secretary general, UPF-India, and **Dr. Drissa Kone**, assistant professor, Unification Theological Seminary, United States.

#### Spiritual Leaders:

**Ven. Pramahaboonthin Taosiri**, president, Thai Buddhist Society, Sweden

**Archbishop George August Stallings Jr.**, national co-chair, ACLC, United States

**Dr. Mohammed Al Habash**, professor of religious studies, former member of parliament, Syria

### **Farewell Banquet**

#### Closing Reflections:

**Dr. Chang King Yuh**, former minister, Mainland Affairs Council, Executive Yuan, Taiwan, explained that Mainland China has come a long way in terms of reform and joining the international community since the establishment of official ties in 1979. The relationship has benefited both nations. As China's economy has expanded, the need for natural resources, markets and transportation has increased. China has increased its military capability and seeks military outposts overseas so that its sea lines of communication will not be in jeopardy in times of crisis. The purpose of such power accumulation and projection is purely defensive, but looking from the U.S. perspective, we can see that this may drive U.S. influence out of the area. President Donald Trump considers economic security as national security and has adopted various measures to address the trade imbalance and now defines China as a "rival power." Just as a strong, prosperous and actively engaged United States is indispensable for the peace, stability and prosperity of the world, so it is for China. "Neither side should attempt to use military or other coercive means to achieve or sustain hegemony," he said.

**Hon. Amjad Moulana**, deputy minister of national integration, reconciliation and official languages, Sri Lanka, described his nation's difficult recent history. "Ideological shifts are slow, as the scars of war were too deep. ... Hundreds of thousands of lives were lost, millions were displaced and a resource-abundant nation was deprived of its true potential," he said. It is important to "address and combat extremist ideology from the very inception." Hon. Moulana closed with the words of U.S. Senator Robert Kennedy when he gave the Day of Affirmation Address at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, in 1966: "It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

**Sheikh Alidou Abdoulahi**, Islamic Youth Association, Niger, thanked the founders of UPF, "which is based on an ideology of peace." He described Islam as a "religion of peace" with "a message of peace." The greeting *Salaam Alaikum* means "peace be upon you." Islam considers everyone as equal before God, regardless of economic or political status, ethnicity, race and ideology. He supports all efforts to bring people together to dialogue "and get to know each other in our differences."

### **Conclusion**

The ILC brought together more than 300 participants from over 80 countries to discuss the theme "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Responsibility of Parliamentarians and Religious Leaders." The select group of international participants, including current and former parliamentarians, along with religious leaders and civil society leaders, focused on the search for innovative solutions to some of the critical issues that we face on the local, national, regional and global levels, from climate change to the rise of extremist ideologies, humanitarian disasters, and conflict.

The ILC honored the legacy of UPF's co-founder, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, who passed away in 2012. On August 27, the participants attended a ceremony marking the sixth anniversary of his passing which

included the World Peace Blessing.

**Significant focal points of agreement:**

1. To collaborate with UPF and its initiatives, including International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), International Leadership Conference (ILC), and World Summit series.
2. To promote UPF's related projects, including Peace Road, Women's Federation for World Peace, World Peace Blessing, Character Education and Sunhak Peace Prize.
3. To protect society's vulnerable, particularly women, children and elderly.
4. To support refugees and displaced persons, as well as the countries and communities that receive them.
5. To improve access to health and education and to protect victims of violence, especially sexual violence and trafficking.
6. To encourage our respective governments and constituents to increase their humanitarian aid efforts, particularly in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
7. To reaffirm our determination to support the United Nations and its programs, primarily in interfaith peacebuilding, peace education and marriage and family.
8. To work for the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.
9. To pool our wisdom, expertise and resources to work toward the building of a culture of peace.
10. To support the creation of an interreligious forum within the Mercosur Parliament.

