

UPF's World Summit 2025 Program Summary

Staffan Berg
May 10, 2025



Seoul, South Korea – World Summit 2025 was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from April 10 to 13 under the theme "Contemporary Challenges to World Order: Establishing a New Era of Peace and Prosperity." In many ways, this Summit marked a departure for UPF. While previous summits have hosted international academic conferences, interreligious assemblies and the Sun Hak Peace Prize awards, this summit also featured the participation of intergovernmental bodies, such as FOPREL and CENSAD, as well as the inauguration of the Interparliamentary Speakers Conference.



April 10

UPF's World Summit 2025 opened with a banquet on April 10. UPF International President **Dr. Michael Jenkins** guided the program. **Dr. Yeon-Ah Moon**, chair of the World Summit Organizing Committee, welcomed all on behalf of UPF founders Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her late husband Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Dr. Moon elaborated that the World Summit's trans-national, trans-religious, and trans-racial nature is a direct result of its vision to manifest "one family of humankind." UPF Chair **Dr. Charles Yang** added further welcoming remarks, followed by congratulatory remarks from dignitaries from around the world.

April 11

The first full day of the conference featured primarily the Sixth Sun Hak Peace Prize Award Ceremony and the World Summit Opening Ceremony. Two plenary sessions followed later in the day; meanwhile,

concurrent programs were offered for FOPREL and the Interparliamentary Speakers Conference.



The **Opening Ceremony**, entitled "Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations," brought together distinguished individuals to address the goal of achieving peace guided by UPF's core principles – mutual prosperity, interdependence, and universally shared values. Distinguished speakers included **H.E. Philemon Yang**, president of the UN General Assembly, who sent a video message; **Madame Signe Zeikate**, first lady of Costa Rica; **H.E. Goodluck Jonathan**, former president of Nigeria; **H.E. Andres Pastrana**, former president of Colombia; **H.E. Macky Sall**, former president of Senegal; **Hon. Newt Gingrich**, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, **H.E. Boris Tadić**, former president of Serbia, and **H.E. Jimmy Morales**, former president of Guatemala.



Plenary Session One featured prominent speakers including former presidents, vice presidents, and other high-level dignitaries. The session concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UPF and CENSAD, a regional organization representing 25 nations and governments across northern Africa. (UPF report: www.upf.org/post/global-leaders-address-the-opening-of-world-summit-2025)



Plenary Session Two focused on a "Vision for an Asia Pacific Union Forum." Congratulatory remarks were offered by **Hon. Agung Laksono**, former speaker of the House of Representatives of Indonesia, and **H.E. Chaoyong Satjipanon**, former Thai ambassador to Washington D.C., UN Geneva, South Korea, Australia, Italy and Indonesia. A progress report on the Asia Pacific Union Forum was given by **Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal**, chairman of UPF Asia-Pacific.



Building on a series of conferences held over the past year, most notably the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace conference hosted by the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia in November 2024, this session highlighted the recently launched Universal Peace Charter.

The Sixth Sunhak Peace Prize Award Ceremony



Dr. Thomas Walsh, co-chair of the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee, opened the Award Ceremony by warmly welcoming the guests, then introduced **H.E. Ban Ki-moon**, former secretary-general of the United Nations and recipient of the Sunhak Founder's Award in 2020, who addressed the audience. **H.E. Macky Sall**, former president of Senegal and Sunhak Laureate 2020, expressed his gratitude to **Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon** for founding the prize and highlighted how it inspires continued efforts towards the ideal of peace and human fraternity.

This year's awardees included:

- **Ms. Wanjira Mathai**, Africa director of the World Resources Institute and chair of the Green Belt Movement, which has planted over **51 million trees** as of 2023. (Interview: [The Earth and I](#))
- **Mr. Hugh Evans**, co-founder of **Global Citizen**, who has turned advocacy into action by mobilizing billions of dollars through concerts and campaigns, including during the HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa, and later during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Mr. Patrick Awuah, Jr.**, founder of **Ashesi University** in Ghana, whose vision is to educate ethical, entrepreneurial young leaders capable of driving innovation and prosperity across Africa.

Additionally, the 2025 Sunhak Founder's Awards were presented to:

- **H.E. Goodluck Jonathan**, former president of Nigeria, honored for his lifelong commitment to strengthening democratic governance in West Africa.

– **Prophet Samuel Radebe**, founder of **The Revelation Church of God** in South Africa, recognized for promoting religious harmony and reducing interreligious conflict through mutual respect and dialogue.

(More at www.upf.org/post/award-ceremony-in-seoul-honors-sunhak-peace-prize-laureates and <http://sunhakpeaceprize.org/SunhakPeacePrize2025/index.html>)



Special Meeting of FOPREL

The Forum of Presidents of Legislative Powers of Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico (FOPREL) held its 31st Extraordinary Meeting on April 11, to discuss strategies for the implementation and harmonization of legislation among its nine member countries. FOPREL, which signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UPF in 2016, is now in the process of granting UPF Observer Organization status with FOPREL.



April 12

For the second full day, participants could choose between a range of different sessions, some of which were held elsewhere in Seoul, some outside the city. This included a session on the environment and climate change; a series of sessions on Women and Peace; an international interfaith prayer meeting; and the General Assembly of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace. At the same time, presidents of parliament from some 40 countries were holding a series of sessions which eventually culminated in the formation of the Interparliamentary Speakers Conference (ISC).



Climate Change and the Environment

This program was organized by the Hyojeong International Foundation for Environmental Peace (HJIFEP). Under the overarching theme "Climate Change, Environmental Crises and the Future of the Earth," experts addressed critical topics including "Climate Change, Environmental Crises and the International Community's Response," as well as "Advances in Science and Technology and the Demand for a New Worldview." **Dr. Sun Jin Moon** delivered the Founder's Message, stressing the urgent need for leadership in confronting environmental issues through global cooperation. (UPF report: www.upf.org/post/experts-suggest-ways-to-manage-climate-crises)



Women and Peace

This session, hosted by the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), opened with speakers addressing "The Role of Women toward a Hopeful Future of Peace and Prosperity," followed by a celebration of the 33d anniversary of the founding of the Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) under the banner of "Women Charting a Peaceful Future Through Cooperation, Reconciliation and Healing."



The program featured several outstanding musical renditions before the WFWPI signature event, the Bridge of Peace Ceremony. **Mrs. Kaeleigh Moffitt**, regional president of WFWP North America, explained the ceremony's symbolism: when two individuals representing different groups, such as colonial powers and their conquered territories or historical enemy nations like Japan and Korea, physically walk to meet each other in the middle of the bridge, it demonstrates the power of reconciliation and healing through personal connection. (UPF report: www.upf.org/post/first-ladies-highlight-women-s-role-in-securing-peace-and-prosperity WFWP report: www.wfwp.org/news/introduction-to-the-wfwp-33rd-anniversary-report)



The Global Role of Religion

This afternoon session was held outside Seoul at the Hyo Jeong Cultural Center in Gapyeong. The host, the Korea Religions Association (KRA), had gathered leaders of all faiths from across South Korea. These were joined by several hundred religious leaders from the World Clergy Leadership Conference (WCLC). In a spirit-filled atmosphere, clergy participated in an international interfaith prayer meeting and discussed "The Role of Religion for Global Coexistence and Prosperity."



The clergy leadership team included **Rev. John Jackson** and **Dr. Mark Abernathy**. Notable speakers included **Dr. Yeon Ah Moon**, **Pastor Paula-White Cain**, **Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan**, **Imboni Samuel Radebe**, and **Ms. Katrina Lantos Swett**. Many of these religious leaders had participated earlier that day in a separate event focused on the strengthening of the family. During the event, 5,000 couples from 90 countries participated in a Holy Marriage Blessing Vow, pledging to build ideal families rooted in love, fidelity and peace.

Events at the National Assembly Building

The other major events on the afternoon of April 12 were held at the National Assembly building. The International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) was first launched in 2016 in this building. This time parliamentarians from around the world came together again to share their vision and their efforts, and to witness the launching of a new intergovernmental body comprised of parliamentary presidents.



Despite the ongoing political turmoil in South Korea, **Rep. Chung Dong-young** of the Democratic Peace Party and **Rep. Na Kyung-won** of the People Power Party extended a warm welcome to the IAPP and some 40 speakers from various legislatures around the globe, current and former heads of state, and other dignitaries who convened at the Republic of Korea National Assembly.

April 13

On April 13, attendees of World Summit 2025 were invited to the entrance ceremony for the Cheon Won Gung in Gapyeong County. The building includes a museum and serves as the administrative headquarters for activities and projects initiated by the founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. The ceremony was officiated by **Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon**, fondly known as "Holy Mother Han."



Following the entrance ceremony, the nearby Cheong Shim Peace World Center stadium filled to capacity as viewers watched a musical drama, *The Korean Epic*, which traces the 5,000-year history of the Korean people from their mythic beginnings through generations of struggle and perseverance. The performance served to remind everyone that North and South Koreans have a shared heritage and enduring kinship.



Apr 11 - 5 min read



GLOBAL LEADERS ADDRESS THE OPENING OF WORLD SUMMIT 2025



Seoul, South Korea – World Summit 2025 opened at the Lotte World Hotel in Seoul on April 11, bringing together political and religious leaders, along with experts from various other fields, from 117 nations, to explore paths to global peace.

Under the theme "Contemporary Challenges to World Order: Establishing a New Era of Peace and Prosperity," the event marked the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, which was founded on October 24, 1945, in the same year the division of the Korean Peninsula took place.

In his welcoming remarks at the opening ceremony, **Dr. Charles S. Yang**, chairman of UPF, warned that the current security situation on the Korean Peninsula is "extremely concerning." He said that "without peace on the Korean Peninsula, there can be no peace in Northeast Asia. Nor can we achieve world peace." He continued, "North and South Korea must resolve their hostile confrontation and create a cooperative relationship of mutual dependence and coexistence. To this end, North Korea must be persuaded to open its doors widely and cooperate with the Republic of Korea."

Dr. Paula White-Cain, senior advisor to US President Donald Trump for the newly created White House Faith Office, attested to the importance of faith and mentioned that over 1,000 faith leaders from diverse religions have visited the White House since January 20 to help shape policy, conduct faith diplomacy, and defend religious liberty.

Dr. White lauded Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her late husband, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, for "their courageous and undaunting faith" and "their transformative leadership and their dedication to world peace," through numerous peace conferences "where even representatives from nations in conflict sit together in peace."

Pakistan Senate President **Dr. Yusuf Raza Gillani** acknowledged the daunting challenges facing our world, but voiced optimism that a new generation of leadership is emerging with a collective resolve to address the issues.

H.E. Philemon Yang, president of the UN General Assembly, shared a video message in which he acknowledged that the United Nations' founding aspiration to end the scourge of war remains urgent and unfulfilled. "Notwithstanding," he said, "we are not powerless. History has shown that nations united by resolve and common goals can embrace a brighter tomorrow."

H.E. Goodluck Jonathan, former president of Nigeria and recipient of this year's Sunhak Peace Prize Founder's Award, reminded the audience of the ideals upon which the United Nations was founded: unity, cooperation and dignity for all. He said we must protect these values "now more than ever before, because the everyday people are counting on us. The mother who just wants to feed her child. The young person looking for hope. The families driven from their homes by violence or natural disaster. The decisions we make in rooms like this ripple out into the real lives of millions."

H.E. Andres Pastrana Arango, former president of Colombia, and current president of the Centrist Democrat International, is known for his efforts to crack down on drug trafficking. Mr. Pastrana noted that Colombia was the only country in Latin America to participate in the Korean War, sending almost 5,000 soldiers. He said this is a crucial moment for humanity, which cannot afford to miss "the enormous opportunity that lies before us in building a new world."

H.E. Macky Sall, former president of Senegal, expressed his belief that the U.N. Security Council should be able to play a more decisive and robust role in the face of global security threats. He said this is why he continues to advocate for reform of the Security Council and fairer representation within global economic and financial institutions.

Madame Signe Zeikate, first lady of Costa Rica and former economist at the World Bank, reflected on her experience under Soviet occupation in her birthplace of Latvia, until its liberation in 1991. "Living through that history taught me what the true value of freedom, self-determination and the responsibility that we share to safeguard those principles mean."

She said that Costa Rica, her second home, illustrates what it means to "invest in peace." In 1948, Costa Rica made the choice to abolish its military and redirect the funds from the defense budget towards education, healthcare, social programs and environmental protection. "It signaled a social transformation that placed people's welfare above all else," she said. "Thanks to that vision, Costa Rica has fostered a culture of diplomacy, human rights, and sustainability. Our approach recognizes that lasting peace must be nurtured from within by offering a way to achieve dignified living conditions for all."

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offering a way to ensure dignified living conditions for all.

Hon. Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the US House of Representatives, pointed out that profound changes are occurring in his country and around the world, citing the radical transformation in Argentina, the unprecedented challenges in Germany and France, the rise of tensions in country after country, not to mention the actual wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, and the potential of war over Taiwan. "The fact is," he said, "the whole human race is tossed between the dangers of war, the growing violence by non-governmental systems – whether they're drug cartels or religiously motivated groups – on one hand, and the human race's desire for more science, more technology, more opportunities, on the other hand."

The importance of the World Summit, he said, lies in its ability to discuss all the challenges we face in "a positive, idealistic way." He added, "At the same time, it's important to have leaders here who have led their countries, who've had to solve problems, who've had to win elections, who've had to actually govern. So you get a kind of a practical idealism here, not just ideas up in the clouds."

H.E. Boris Tadic, former president of Serbia, said that although recognizing people who brokered peace between warring countries is important, it is even more important to recognize people who are able to prevent wars and conflicts. He pointed out that "whoever analyzes the activities of the United Nations can come to the conclusion that the global institution is much more focused on imposing peace than on preventing conflicts." He argued that avoiding conflict in the first place would make post-war peace efforts unnecessary.

H.E. Jimmy Morales, former president of Guatemala, observed that humanity is facing an economic crisis, similar to the circumstances prior to World War I. This is exacerbated, he said, by socio-political instability, the climate crisis, poverty, and armed conflict. He stressed the importance of regional cooperation, citing collaborative efforts by Guatemala, Honduras, and Ecuador to bring peace in the region. Such joint efforts are also necessary, he said, on the part of the international community, to achieve the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Besides diplomacy and international cooperation, he also cited education and sharing technological innovation as important tools to advance peace.

By Dirk Anthonis, UPF-USA
April 11, 2025

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Wanjira Mathai Sees Green in Africa's Future

Environmental Activist Says Opening Hearts Is Key

The Earth & I Editorial Team

▣Part 1▣ Special Section: Fourth Anniversary of *The Earth & I*

Wanjira Mathai, a leader of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya and Managing Director for Africa and Global Partnerships at the World Resources Institute, was in Seoul, Korea, in April 2025, to receive her 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize. Around that occasion, editors of *The Earth & I* had the privilege of interviewing her about her life and work. Here we present some highlights of that interview, and some comments she made as a guest speaker at a conference on environmental issues on April 12, organized by the Hyo Jeong International Foundation for Environmental Peace (HJIFEP).



Wanjira Mathai ©Sunhak Peace Prize Foundation

Wanjira Mathai sees green in Africa's future. Perhaps she has always seen things that way, but there is a rich history behind how this lover of nature became the environmental champion she is today.

Now at mid-life, Wanjira Mathai has garnered global acclaim for her many contributions to sustainable development, such as leading the [AFR100 initiative](#), which aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land across 31 African countries by 2030. She has also led and now serves on the Board of the Green Belt Movement, founded by her mother, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai, and is currently serving as managing director for Africa and Global Partnerships at the [World Resources Institute \(WRI\)](#), and as the Africa advisor at Bezos Earth Fund.

Wanjira Mathai's many awards include BBC's 100 Women (2023), TIME's 100 Climate list of most influential climate leaders in 2024, and the 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize (see "[World Peace Education Center Events Open New Era of Global Cooperation](#)").

In brief remarks at an environmental conference organized by HJIFEP on April 12, 2025, in Seoul, Mathai said, "The Earth is our life support system ... it is what we need to survive ... I cannot tell you how many times people ask me, 'What is the choice we have to make in this relationship between economic sustainability and environmental protection?' It is a false choice ... if we destroy the planet, we will have nothing to build these future economies on."

Being an environmental activist wasn't always in Mathai's future. In her interview with editors of *The Earth & I*, she said, "I studied biology in college (Hobart & William Smith Colleges, USA) and then thought I wanted to be a doctor." She added, "I decided at last that it didn't really energize me." She went on to get a master's degree in public health at Emory University in Atlanta and worked for six years at the Carter Presidential Center on disease eradication.

At that stage, she decided to take a break and returned to Nairobi where she began to work with her mother. "And it was again about community and people," she said, though this time, "the work was about planting trees and saving the environment." She soon realized her mother's work "was no different [than working in public health] because it was about a healthy environment that supports healthy people."

'Green' is More than Planting Trees

Today, "green" means more to Wanjira Mathai than planting trees, though she is setting records for doing that—as of 2023, the Green Belt Movement had planted over 51 million trees.

Transformation requires cross-boundary cooperation, something that is hindered by silos built around expertise.

She told *The Earth & I* that transformation requires cross-boundary cooperation, something that is hindered by silos built around expertise. "People have the best of intentions, they intellectually know that they should be integrating, but it's very difficult to do when you are an expert in your own domain."

"That's why we work at the World Resources Institute (WRI) in teams," she adds. "You need to consider community perspectives on the issues. The carbon issue, for example—it's very complex, and often the part that is left out is the people. Who benefits, who gains, who wins, who loses?"

Mathai's passion for this type of work is palpable. "Right now, I'm in the middle of an initiative that is extremely exciting, trying to work on the protection of the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and the forests of Indonesia. We're saying that ... those three forest blocks, as the lungs of the planet, require all of us to ... work together. Because if we lose any of them, we all lose."



Green Belt Movement tree nursery in Tumutumu Hills, Kenya. Courtesy of Wangari Maathai Foundation/Ariel Poster

'All Decisions Are Local'

Mathai "gets" effective cooperation. She says it involves everyone, up and down. "We have to encompass everything, because the global diplomatic narrative feeds the local. In the end, all solutions are local. It all happens on the ground; but it's so important that there's global solidarity because the financing, the solidarity around what people believe, the priorities that are set by multinational organizations or even multilateral processes, come from the realities on the ground. So, we have to have a constant conversation up and down."

An important part of her work involves mobilizing funds, getting global finances to communities where they are needed. "I think philanthropy is getting smarter and smarter about working with community, working and being partners. We're actually dropping the use of words like 'donors,' because it implies a one-way relationship. But if they're your partners, they're in this with you."

Skipping the High Emissions Phase

When asked if it's possible for developing nations to skip the high emissions stage that plagued developed countries, Wanjira Mathai was optimistic. "Take the example of the epic leapfrogging that was mobile telephony," she said. "On the African continent, we went straight to mobile telephony at a speed that even the consultants who had been hired to model transformation could not appreciate. It transformed everything we know about mobile telephony ... We leapfrogged [the landline stage]."

"Africa today is arguably more connected than most places. More young people are on their mobile phones, on AI, on all sorts of technology, than anywhere in the world."

"Investing in the future is the way to go," she advised. "Africa today is arguably more connected than most places. More young people are on their mobile phones, on AI, on all sorts of technology, than anywhere in the world."

Is education in Africa keeping up with the future? "I think not enough. I think there's a lot more relevant education needed. We are seeing a huge growth in tech-based solutions. FinTech, AI, data hubs, data languages, models that need to be instructed in African languages."

Simple is Luxurious

Does she think that as we move into this more ecologically friendly future, people will need to adopt a simpler, less materialistic lifestyle to protect the environment? Or does she think advanced technology will be the key? "Technology has brought a lot of benefits. But in terms of lifestyle, we have to break the mold we have. It's not sustainable. So, we need to move into a more sustainable mode. It may still be luxurious. It's luxurious to eat healthy. It's luxurious to eat local."

"It's luxurious to eat superfoods today," she added. "But a lot of those are local. For many Kenyans, the vegetables we find in our supermarkets today were not there 10 years ago. They were not considered supermarket worthy. But they are superfoods. There are seven, eight green vegetables that I can buy in my supermarket today that I couldn't buy [before]."

"That's progress!" she said. "I think the nomenclature is a little bit confusing because we almost imply that sustainable is 'less than.'"

Family Traditions

"As a family, we compost to make sure that we reduce the sort of waste that leaves our house and make sure that what we can use, we use," she told *The Earth & I*. "In our neighborhood we have a program where all that compost comes back to our gardens ... [in six weeks] we get an announcement: The compost is ready." She said her teenage children "have grown up separating their waste in Nairobi."

Does she think her children will carry on her mission of protecting the environment? "Oh, absolutely, I think so. It's now stuck in their heads."

Heroes

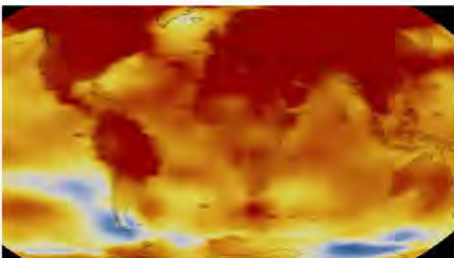


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Apr 14 · 4 min read



AWARD CEREMONY HONORS SUNHAK PEACE PRIZE LAUREATES



Seoul, South Korea – Three problem-solvers who are creatively and successfully tackling some of the world’s biggest challenges were awarded the 6th Sunhak Peace Prize at a magnificent ceremony held at the Lotte World Hotel in Seoul, South Korea. In addition, two important personalities from Africa, one a former head of state, the other a religious leader, were awarded the Founders’ Prize by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. Videos highlighting the journey and work of each laureate were shown.

Dr. Thomas Walsh, co-chair of the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee warmly welcomed the dignitaries from around the world who were present.

H.E. Ban Ki-moon, former secretary-general of the United Nations and recipient of the Sunhak Founder’s Award in 2020, congratulated the five laureates for their contributions to peace, sustainability, and leadership. He honored Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for founding the prize and promoting global unity through her vision of one peaceful human family.

H.E. Macky Sall, former president of Senegal and Sunhak Peace Prize laureate in 2020, also congratulated this year’s laureates, describing how in a world exhausted by war, violence, climate crisis and persistent inequalities, working towards the ideal of peace and human fraternity is an act of faith, goodwill, courage and patience.

2025 Sunhak Peace Prize Laureates

Award recipient **Ms. Wanjira Mathai**, chair of the Green Belt Movement and Africa director of the World Resources Institute, expressed deep gratitude for the prize, describing how its founder’s vision of peace – built through collaboration, service, and uplifting the most vulnerable – resonated deeply with her. She shared that her mother, Wangari Maathai, recipient of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize, instilled in her the belief that the most meaningful work is that which benefits others, and that true satisfaction comes from service to others. Ms. Mathai emphasized her mission to promote inclusive, sustainable development and environmental restoration, and highlighted Africa’s potential in the global green economy, calling for bold, transformative action to ensure a resilient, equitable future for all. She described how South Korea’s rise through strategic investment inspires Africa to harness its advantages – a youthful workforce, renewable energy, and natural resources – for inclusive transformation. She dedicated the award to Africa’s youth, the driving force behind a resilient, courageous, and prosperous future.

The second recipient, **Mr. Hugh Evans**, co-founder of Global Citizen, dedicated the prize to his team of partners, artists, and advocates. He explained that, inspired by Nelson Mandela’s belief that poverty is manmade and can be eradicated through justice, he co-founded Global Citizen to turn advocacy into action. From mobilizing billions through concerts and campaigns in Australia, New York, Mumbai, and Johannesburg, to launching global events like “One World: Together at Home” during the COVID-19 pandemic, his work reached over 1.3 billion people.

Mr. Evans described how Global Citizen empowers individuals to take meaningful action on climate change, education, and humanitarian crises, proving that ordinary people can have an extraordinary impact. The third recipient, **Mr. Patrick Awuah**, founder of Ashesi University in Ghana, accepted the prize on behalf of his university community and African youth, whose future he believes holds great promise. Motivated by concerns for his children’s future, he explained how he left a successful career in the United States to return to Ghana. In 2002, he founded Ashesi University with the vision of educating ethical, entrepreneurial leaders to drive innovation and prosperity across Africa.

He highlighted Ashesi University’s impact through three stories: describing a group of students who helped mediate conflict in a Liberian refugee camp through business workshops; explaining the creation of Africa’s first student-led honor code, fostering a culture of integrity; and relating the story of a student from a rural village who had never used a computer before, entered the university, earned a Ph.D. in computer science, and built technology to diagnose malaria. Mr. Awuah emphasized the power of shared purpose, purposeful action, and providing people with the tools to create meaningful change.

Founders’ Prize Recipients

Next, the Founders’ Award was presented by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, beginning with **H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan**, former president of Nigeria and chair of the International Summit Council for Peace-Africa. Accepting the reward with gratitude, he reflected on his humble beginnings in Nigeria’s Niger Delta, emphasizing that no dream is too big when driven by service and peace. He credited his achievements to collective efforts, especially recognizing his wife, Patience Jonathan, for her unwavering support.

He announced that all financial benefits from the prize would be donated to the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation to further its mission of promoting peace, democracy, and inclusive development in Africa. Through initiatives like the West African Elders Forum and the National Summit Council for Peace, Dr. Jonathan will continue to support political stability in Africa. He concluded by affirming his dedication to peace and governance and thanked the committee for recognizing peacebuilders worldwide.

The second recipient, **Prophet Samuel Radebe**, founder of The Revelation Spiritual Home, expressed deep gratitude as he accepted the Sunhak Peace Prize, calling it an unexpected yet meaningful recognition of his life's purpose, rooted in his spiritual journey. He emphasized that true service is not driven by the pursuit of awards, but by a deeper commitment to making a positive impact in the world.

He acknowledged the challenges faced by those who work for good, including criticism and opposition, often from powerful figures, even religious leaders. Despite these hardships, he affirmed that the values embodied by the Sunhak Peace Prize remind peacebuilders that perseverance through adversity ultimately inspires global change.

The event concluded with a moving performance featuring Yuria, a South Korean musical actress; Michael Lee, an American actor and singer based in Seoul; and the Little Angels Children's Folk Ballet of Korea, with each performing separately and then combining their talents in a grand finale.

By Alan Sillitoe, Communications Director, UPF-Europe and Middle East
April 11, 2025

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Apr 12 · 4 min read

EXPERTS SUGGEST WAYS TO MANAGE CLIMATE CRISES



Seoul, South Korea – Two experts on climate change and the environment addressed a breakout session on environmental issues during the World Summit, each followed by a commentator and discussion. The session, organized by the Hyo Jeong International Foundation for Environmental Peace (HIJFEP), took place at the Lotte World Hotel on April 12, 2025.

Dr. Douglas D.M. Joo, chair of HIJFEP, in his welcoming remarks explained the background of the organization, its founding in 2017 by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, its conferences and its publications, including the online environmental magazine, *The Earth & I*.

Dr. Sun Jin Moon, executive director of HIJFEP, gave the founder's address on behalf of her mother. She said HIJFEP's mission is "to find, promote, and help implement the most effective solutions to environmental challenges." She described its approach as examining both conventional, materialist science and frontier, postmaterialist science. "Ultimately," she said, "the fundamental solution to environmental problems is based on elevating our consciousness and establishing harmonious relationships between humans and nature."

H.E. Keeyong Chung, deputy minister for climate change and special representative for the Indo-Pacific region under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, offered congratulatory remarks. Amb. Chung said it was time for the global community to "move beyond declarations and toward decisive action." He pointed out four priorities as "essential conditions for credible progress: market opportunity, global solidarity, technological innovation, and effective governance." He also described South Korea's climate commitments and actions it has taken toward those goals.

Former Senegal President H.E. Macky Sall, who currently serves as chair of the Supervisory Board of the Global Center on Adaptation, stressed that environmental challenges are global in nature, and require a worldwide vision. He pointed out that developed nations must prioritize mitigation efforts, reducing and optimizing energy use, while developing nations must focus on adaptation. He stressed that Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) represent the best opportunity for equitable energy transition, and encouraged developed countries to support Africa's efforts, as the least polluting continent, to combat climate change.

Topic 1: Climate Change, Environmental Crises and the International Community's Response

Following the opening speeches, **Prof. Gun Woong Bahng**, chair of the Dept. of Mechanical Engineering at the State University of New York's Korea branch, served as session chair and introduced the presenters.

Dr. Soonchang Yoon, professor emeritus of atmospheric sciences at Seoul National University and chair of the National Committee of Future Earth, gave a presentation on "Characteristics of the Paris Agreement and Response to the Climate Crisis." Dr. Yoon outlined contemporary threats of air pollution and climate change, as well as the achievements and challenges of international cooperation to mitigate the impacts of these crises on human society.

Dr. Yoon explained the history of global warming leading to climate change, causing heatwaves, wildfires, droughts, and heavier storm systems that threaten human lives and habitats. He then discussed efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1.5°C, through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Earth Summit in 1992, and the Paris Agreement 2015 (COP21). He concluded that, "The window of opportunity to limit global warming to safe levels is rapidly closing," and there is an urgent need for global cooperation to cut emissions to slow climate change.

Dr. Suh-Yong Chung, director of the Center for Global Climate and Marine Governance at Korea University, suggested in his commentary that greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced through low-carbon or carbon-neutral technologies. He stressed the need to ensure that developing countries have access to financial resources, technology, and capacity building. He expressed optimism that clean energy technologies would be commercialized around the world, in fields such as electric power, forestry, industrial processes, transportation, and buildings. He suggested that the climate change response could create new jobs and bring new opportunities for sustainable development.

Guest speaker **Ms. Wanjira Mathai**, 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize laureate, is managing director for Africa and global partnerships for the World Resources Institute; chair and director of the Greenbelt Movement; program leader for Women Entrepreneurs in Renewables; and Africa adviser for the Bezos Earth Fund. She described Africa as "the hub of renewable energy, with the best solar potential in the world," and suggested that energy-intensive industries, like AI, should consider locating their operations in Africa. She said that Africa's green competitive advantage should be at the center of the climate solutions of the future.

Outcomes should be at the center of the climate solutions of the future.

Topic 2: Advances in Science and Technology and the Demand for a New Worldview

Dr. Cliff Davidson, director of the Center for Sustainable Engineering at Syracuse University, said that reductions in the use of many resources are essential. He advocated developing a "circular economy" consistent with a reduce-reuse-recycle approach, to transform the one-way "linear economy," which moves from raw materials-to-manufacturing-to-landfill. He said that industrial systems should be modeled on natural ecosystems, which are self-sustaining.

He stressed the imperative to reduce CO2 emissions, and stated that "renewable energy can replace everything we do with fossil fuels." He said a new worldview that emphasizes success is needed, combined with strong leadership around the world, to solve the environmental crisis.

Dr. Arnaud Delorme, professor of neuroscience at the Paul Sabatier University in Toulouse, France, said in his commentary that in order to solve environmental issues, "a deeper transformation in how we see ourselves in relation to nature is necessary." He said that modern city-dwellers are disconnected from nature and from each other, which fosters apathy and inaction. He said we should learn from nature's efficiency, resilience, and balance, and design systems that mimic natural processes.

Prof. Gun Woong Bahng concluded the session by summarizing the proceedings and reinforcing the perspective that a new culture of respect for nature and responsibility for the environment is needed. Such a culture must be shared and promoted by industry and world leaders, with a sense of urgency, if it is to change the current trajectory of climate change and environmental degradation in a significant and effective manner.

By Kathleen Hwang, UPF International
April 12, 2025

Environment Korea World Summit 2025 Sunhak Peace Prize

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Apr 12 - 5 min read



FIRST LADIES HIGHLIGHT WOMEN’S ROLE IN SECURING PEACE



Seoul, South Korea – An upbeat and inspiring program, hosted by the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), brought together dozens of prominent and influential ladies from around the world to discuss the role that women play in promoting a culture of peace. The meeting took place on April 12, 2025, as part of World Summit 2025, in the Lotte World Hotel in Seoul.

In her welcoming remarks, **Mrs. Moriko Hori**, president of the Women's Federation for World Peace, said that the heart of peace begins in the family, starting with a woman's innate capacity for nurturing and love. She spoke of connecting minds and hearts across borders through a "culture of heart," and of women leaders carrying out their roles with compassion and understanding. Mrs. Hori called upon all those present to join in weaving threads of dialogue, trust and cooperation into a tapestry of peace, and spark changes that resonate across generations and toward the future.

Dr. Julia H. Moon, general director of the Universal Ballet, spoke on behalf of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founder of UPF. She praised the assembly's efforts in advancing women's leadership, strengthening the family and resolving to address global challenges. She explained the dedication of the Cheon Won Gung Peace Palace, to take place the next day, as a historic unveiling of a global center for the advancement of world peace, interfaith harmony and unity of humanity as one family under God.

Dr. Samia Burton, co-chair of IAFLP-USA, emphasized that women represent a powerful force for change. She explained the role of first ladies as "bridging divides, inspiring change, and leading with grace and conviction," reaching the hearts of families, communities and entire nations. She explained that women, as architects of peace, need to draw upon collective experience and wisdom rather than force, working with compassion, diplomacy and commitment to justice and equality.

Madam Signe Zeikate, the first lady of Costa Rica, then addressed the gathering. Pointing out that Costa Rica is the oldest democracy in Latin America, she stressed the democratic principle of ensuring that every voice is heard, including those of women. She explained that Costa Rica has achieved a 50-50 ratio of men and women in public office. The involvement of women has enhanced economic growth and environmental sustainability, she said, with major issues resolved through dialogue rather than force. Madam Zeikate explained that women are still the primary family caregivers, suggesting that this role could be better balanced in the home.

Madam Fatima Vila Nova, first lady of Sao Tome & Principe, described her nation's culture as one in which everyone is considered family, which prevents extreme conflict. Opposing groups and different cultures treat each other as brothers and cousins, who are able to sit together and share meals, even as political antagonists. Her country is working to improve a support system for needy and single mothers, and to hold perpetrators accountable for sexual abuse and domestic violence. She added that her country's many promising young people will lead the nation to prosper.

Madam Ida Odinga, wife of the former prime minister of Kenya, described the current status of women worldwide. She said that women are serving in international forums, and represent 22% of cabinet members globally; in 141 countries, more than 3 million women hold elected positions. Societies that empower women in education, civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful. In terms of peacebuilding strategies, Dr. Odinga described her own efforts to diffuse conflict following Kenya's 2007 election, where grassroots community mobilization led to peace agreements prevailing over violence. She recommended prioritizing the inclusion of women in peace processes, addressing the root causes of conflict, and promoting gender equality.

Dame Patience Jonathan, former first lady of Nigeria, described her country's peace initiatives, which include peace advocacy in the various states; convening a National Summit on Peace, Security and Development; a National Youth Peace Concert; and the distribution of relief materials to internally displaced persons. She pointed out that families can only contribute to community development if they have a strong economic base. She started an organization, A-Aruera Reachout Foundation, to offer skills acquisition programs to families in need. She encouraged involvement in such programs by government, corporate bodies and well-meaning individuals.

Madam Hilda Patricia Argueta de Morales, former first lady of Guatemala, said, "Peace begins with a smile." She named four pillars needed in society: 1) Strong families as a foundation for a strong society and prosperous nation; 2) Arts, which have a transformative power and can build bridges of understanding; 3) Women's empowerment, which advances communities and countries; and 4) Global cooperation as the key to peace and prosperity. She explained projects in Guatemala that promote these goals.

Madam Callista Jennie Mutharika, former first lady of Malawi, said her country is often called "the warm heart of Africa." She said Malawi's national peace policy ensures that "peace is not just the absence of conflict; it is the

armed. She said that our national peace policy ensures that peace is not just the absence of conflict, it is the presence of courage, the courage to listen, to compromise, and to unite." She described how villagers support each other in hard times, and the power women hold in building bridges between communities.

Madam Emilia Patricia Alfaro de Franco, former first lady and senator of Paraguay, described her country's efforts to aid rural women through programs dealing with reproductive health, prevention of violence against women, childcare, and economic empowerment. Since 2018, more than 175,000 women have been served. Other programs provide loans to female heads of households, help for women in setting up businesses, and training as forestry technicians or managers. She also stressed the importance of strong families, and of teaching solid values and principles to children.

Madam Shiranthi Rajapaksa, former first lady of Sri Lanka described the attributes of women in fostering peace: the ability to settle conflicts before they worsen, a nurturing attitude, patience, and a diplomatic approach. She said that women have played critical roles in post-war reconciliation in advocating for truth, justice and healing. She said that women need to be empowered with education and leadership opportunities. She encouraged participants to take practical steps in their own societies and countries, promoting interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue, as well as peace education in schools.

Madam Reema Harrysingh-Carmona, former first lady of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, spoke of women as the backbone of society, and the need to nurture an environment for peace by ensuring a balance between men and women in political structures. She pointed out that UN Resolution 1325 gave credence to the role of women in advancing change and curtailing conflict, and said this should be reflected in the corridors of power. She also mentioned Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, as an exemplary program, where women are placed in effective positions and in all facets of economic, social, and political life. She said that women have a defining and essential role in sustaining peace and development.

By Blessie Dhakal, International Coordinator, IAFLP
April 12, 2025

Korea World Summit 2025 Women IAFLP International Association of First Ladies for Peace

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