

Africa Summit 2018: Honoring the Legacy of President Nelson Mandela

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Cape Town, South Africa -- On November 21 through 24, 2018, the international conference on "Peace and Human Development in Africa," hosted by the Universal Peace Federation and the Royal House of Mandela, took place at the International Convention Center in Cape Town, South Africa.

The summit provided a platform to honor the legacy of President Nelson Mandela during this centennial celebration year (1918–2018) and to exchange views on current critical issues. Attending were 700 participants from throughout Africa, including former heads of state, government ministers, speakers and deputy speakers of parliaments, members of parliament, well-known religious leaders and prominent traditional rulers. Several nations from around the world also sent a delegation of parliamentarians.



As a co-host of the event, Chief Zwelivelile Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela and a member of the South African Parliament, had invited his colleague parliamentarians from the Cape Town-based Parliament and from the Pan African Parliament, the legislative body of the African Union.

After a powerful rendition of the South African National Anthem by popular South African singer Khanyo Maphumulo, the Africa Summit opening plenary began with prayers by representatives from the interfaith community of South Africa. Dr. Thomas Walsh, chair of UPF-International offered welcoming remarks, followed by Chief Mandela, who said: "Just as our global icon and hero [Nelson Mandela] has become a symbol [of peace] for millions around the world, so, too, has the work of UPF received wide acclaim. Cape Town extends a warm welcome to Mother Moon to the mother city."



Two distinguished guests then addressed the audience. Hon. Roger Nkodo Dang, the Cameroonian president of the Pan African Parliament, expressed his gratitude to UPF for organizing a Summit honoring the legacy of Nelson Mandela and spoke about the significance of the great peacemaker for the African continent. Hon. Baleka Mbete, the president of the South African National Assembly, gave a moving testimony from her personal experience with Nelson Mandela as they worked side by side for the liberation of South Africa from apartheid.

Hon. Eric Houndete, vice president of the National Assembly of Benin, introduced the keynote speaker, UPF Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, recalling her and her husband's lifelong devotion to building a world of peace by proposing a new leadership paradigm of living for the sake of others.



Dr. Moon described the long historical process to restore the original ideal for humankind and gave insightful guidance to the gathered assembly. "We must transcend race; we must transcend religion, and we must know that God, our Creator, the Heavenly Parent is our parent.... The True Family Movement is the only shortcut to a world of peace," she said.

Representatives from 20 nations, including the 13 countries that had signed agreements for the "Heavenly Africa project," accompanied Dr. Moon in the launching of the International Peace Highway, a project initiated and described by her husband as "a world superhighway starting from the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, to Santiago in Chile, and from London to New York, making the world a single

community."

The afternoon program began with a session on the vision and activities of UPF in Africa. Mr. Adama Doumbia, UPF Africa Secretary General, introduced UPF's "Heavenly Africa project," which is based on the vision of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values. The 10 projects involve parliamentarians, religious leaders and traditional rulers and range from promoting "true family values" and character education to sustainable economic development. The activities of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) were presented by UPF Deputy Secretary General Dr. Paterne Zinsou.



Mr. Philbert Seka, president of Youth and Students for Peace in Africa, shared about the recently launched youth movement and its educational activities. Dr. Taj Hamad, vice president of UPF-International, spoke about the current work of UPF with the United Nations. To close the session, South Africa Family Federation representative Rev. Moruti Ledwaba shared about the campaign to revive family values in South Africa through the Marriage Blessing movement.

The next session on the theme "Honoring the Legacy of Nelson Mandela" began with a speech by Chief Mandela, who captivated the audience by his personal account of the life of his grandfather. He shared how he came to understand the value of his grandfather breaking racial barriers amid intense and dangerous social conflicts to secure a prosperous future for his country. Representatives from the Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities in South Africa who had worked side by side with Nelson Mandela against apartheid also testified to his role in building modern South Africa.



The first day of the Summit ended with a special session led by Dr. Thomas Walsh to announce the third group of laureates of the Sunhak Peace Prize, to be presented at a ceremony on February 9, 2019, in Seoul, Korea. "Through the 2019 prize, we present 'human rights and development of Africa' as a future peace theme for the common destiny of humankind," Dr. Il Sik Hong, chairman of the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee, said in announcing the laureates.

The one-million-dollar prize will be shared by Waris Dirie, a Somali-born activist and supermodel who has led the fight against the practice of female genital mutilation, and Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, a Nigerian physician who has taken on Africa's food crisis through his work to support small farmers.

The second day of the Summit was dedicated to the African assemblies of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) and the International Association of Traditional Rulers for Peace (IATP) -- three projects recently launched by the Universal Peace Federation throughout the world.



Moderated by Dr. Paterne Zinsou, deputy secretary general of UPF Africa, the IAPP panel consisted of distinguished speakers and deputy speakers of parliaments from Burundi, Western Sahara, Zimbabwe, Mali, Malawi, Uganda, Central African Republic and Congo. They testified to the influence that Nelson Mandela had in their countries and throughout the continent of Africa through his lifelong struggle for liberation from oppression.

The prestigious IAPD assembly was moderated by Dr. Hamad. Religious leaders representing the diversity of religions in Africa took the stand: Christian, Muslim and Hindu leaders as well as representatives from the Khoisan, the original ethnic group in South Africa, and from the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative. Archbishop George A. Stallings, Jr., co-chair of the American Coalition for Leadership and Clergy (ACLC), concluded the session with remarks on the need for religious leaders to take the lead in supporting and promoting family values.

Moderated by Mr. Futila Di Mayeko, director of UPF-Central Africa, the IATP assembly featured traditional rulers from Benin, Zambia, Ivory Coast, Senegal and South Africa, impressively dressed in their traditional garb. Chief Mandela, head of the African branch of IATP, opened the panel by sharing his vision and experience as chief of the Thembu clan in South Africa, a position he occupies succeeding his grandfather Nelson Mandela. Chief Kapinga of Zambia asserted the crucial role of traditional rulers in contemporary Africa. Chief Samba of the Ivory Coast shared insights in leadership that he learned from UPF Founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon: "We need to treat our people with a parental heart and to recognize the importance of our ancestors and their support for our work on the earth," he said.

The second day of the Summit concluded with breakout sessions where parliamentarians, religious leaders, traditional rulers and civil society leaders discussed and proposed recommendations on the implementation of the Summit theme. A separate meeting to discuss UPF projects for Africa was held with the 15 government ministers who attended the Africa Summit, centering on Dr. Thomas Walsh and UPF-Africa Secretary General Adama Doumbia.

On the morning of November 24, two sessions concluded the Summit. A religious leader from Iceland and a parliamentarian from Bolivia testified to the worldwide impact of Nelson Mandela's legacy. In his concluding speech, Chief Mandela moved again the audience with a personal testimony about Nelson Mandela, his own struggles as a child when he first met with his grandfather in prison, and the way his grandfather entrusted his education to some of his closest companions in the struggle.

The Cape Town Declaration was unanimously approved and signed by the participants. It reads, in part,

We are committed to practicing mutual respect, harmony and cooperation with one another as members of one family under God. During this Summit we have discussed the critical issues facing humanity at this time, including poverty, conflict, environmental degradation, lack of adequate health care and proper education for young boys and girls. We explored opportunities for development of infrastructure, educational curricula, entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, and good governance in African nations, as well as interreligious dialogue and cooperation.



Reflecting on the Summit, Hon. Dr. N'Kumu Frey, DR Congo parliamentarian and IAPP chairperson, said, "We have reached the higher grounds with UPF. We have to work jointly with parliamentarians, traditional chiefs and religious leaders. They can influence the governments."

Hon. Dr. Titus Thwala, former parliamentarian in Swaziland said, "All we need to do is take inspiration from President Mandela, take inspiration from Father Moon and Mother Moon, and move forward. Nothing is going to stop us."

After the summit concluded, an Interfaith Peace Blessing Ceremony was held for 3,000 interreligious couples. Dr. Prophet Samuel Radebe, founder and leader of the Revelation Church of God, one of the largest traditional churches in South Africa, gave a profound testimony to Dr. Moon. "I'm not a formal speaker. I speak from the heart. This is the work of True Mother, putting all religions together. This day will be remembered. It will not be erased."

Dr. Moon, in her prayer, asked for blessings upon the continent and the future of a heavenly Africa. "We give our endless gratitude and praise to heaven as a new history begins through the ladies and gentlemen receiving the Blessing here today.... I pray that they become families that have all the qualifications so they become people who take responsibility for future generations and broaden the foundation to create a world of peace and happiness for their second and third generations."

In his congratulatory remarks, Hon. Mahamane Ousmane, former president of Niger, said, "Let me offer my deepest gratitude to Mother Moon for bringing this blessing ceremony to South Africa and Africa. When we look back on this remarkable ceremony, we will surely see that it will have marked an historic upturn in having released all the deepest values, ideals and longings in the hearts of our people."

The international conference on "Peace and Human Development in Africa," concluded successfully. The distinguished group of participants from throughout Africa and other parts of the world honored the legacy of Nelson Mandela and expressed gratitude and satisfaction to the host organizations for the opportunity and platform for such an engagement and meeting of hearts and minds towards building a world of mutual understanding, sustainable peace and prosperity for all.