

Paris, France's Centenary Forum Discusses Peace in Africa and Korea

Jacques Marion
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Paris, France -- On the occasion of the UPF Founders Centenary Exhibition, UPF-France organized a forum on prospects for peace in Africa and Korea.

In order to respect the sanitary conditions imposed by the pandemic, about 20 participants attended the October 24, 2020, event at the Espace Barrault education center of UPF, while others followed the program online.

The theme of the first session was "Prospects for Peace in Sahelian Africa."

Mr. Ma Mbelenga Ngbama, head of the Sub-Saharan Africa Group at the Foresight and Security Institute of Europe (IPSE), gave an informative presentation of the various challenges -- strategic, economic, diplomatic -- in the Sahel region. He highlighted the divergent interests of local populations, neighboring African powers, European powers and Islamist organizations confronting each other in the region. The solutions, he insisted, will depend essentially on an inter-African dialogue.



The second speaker, Mr. Mohamed Larbi Haouat, president of the Association of Solidarity for Integration through Languages, Education and Culture (ASILEC), affiliated to UNESCO, and director of studies at the Foresight and Security Institute of Europe (IPSE), focused on Tunisia. Tracing the politico-religious crisis that his country has experienced in recent years, he showed how it has fostered the rise of radical Islamism and resulted in the departure of many young Tunisians to Syria. Today Tunisia must confront the problem of the return of these jihadists, he said.

The session concluded with a presentation by Mr. Jacques Marion, president of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, on UPF's peace initiatives in Africa. First recalling the values that guide the association's activities, he then described UPF's "Africa Project," which combines activities with associations of leaders at the highest level throughout the African continent, with various peace and sustainable

development projects. He also described recent Africa Summits attended by UPF founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon together with African heads of state and government.



The theme of the second session was "70 Years after the Korean War: Prospects for Peace in Northeast Asia."

Professor Barthélemy Courmont, a professor of international relations at the Catholic University of Lille and research director at the Institute of International and Strategic Relations (IRIS) in Paris, gave a brilliant presentation on the current situation in North Korea and the issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula.

He described the ruling "Kim Dynasty" and discussed their political future. Then he spoke about the inter-Korean relationship and the prospects that are opening today for a rapprochement or eventual reunification, 70 years after the start of the Korean War. Finally, he underlined the political and strategic stakes on the regional and international level, considering the interests of the great powers surrounding Korea: China, Japan, Russia and the United States.

The session concluded with a presentation on UPF peace initiatives in Northeast Asia by Mr. Laurent Ladouce, research fellow at the Universal Peace Federation. Recalling Gen. Douglas MacArthur's vision at the end of World War II of the beginning of a new era for the world from the Asia-Pacific region, he outlined the various projects initiated by UPF founder Dr. Sun Myung Moon, taking into account the growing role of this part of the world in the development of international exchanges. In particular, he described the project for an international highway linking all continents and promoting economic and cultural exchanges, along with the related projects for a Japan-Korea tunnel and a Bering Strait tunnel between Russia and the United States.

The forum was the occasion to honor a dedicated UPF supporter as Ambassador for Peace. Mr. Dadastone Ipoma Nkanga, a researcher in biological and medical engineering and a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo who today is based in France, has developed noteworthy social and humanitarian activities in his native country and in Europe through the Ipoma Association and Foundation. UPF-France was pleased to include him in its growing network of Ambassadors for Peace.

