

UPF Europe and Middle East: ILC July 2021 Executive Summary

Melanie Komagata
July 29, 2021

Europe and the Middle East -- Track II diplomacy as a path to Korean reunification was the focus of eight sessions of an International Leadership Conference.

The online conference, held from July 27 to 29, 2021, by the Europe and Middle East branch of UPF, was titled "Toward the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Best Practices in Track II Diplomacy."

The webinar series was the second of three ILCs that followed the launch on May 9 of Think Tank 2022 - a worldwide alliance of experts from government, academia, civil society, faith-based organizations, the media, business, and the arts who have committed to work together for the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea.

Track II diplomacy can be defined as "the practice of non-governmental, informal and unofficial contacts and activities between private citizens or groups of individuals, sometimes called 'non-state actors'" (Diamond and McDonald, 1991). Neither Track 1.5 nor Track II discussions carries the official weight of traditional diplomacy, yet they offer a private, open environment for individuals to build trust, hold conversations and discuss solutions in a way their official counterparts sometimes cannot. Trusted figures often can glean better insights and nuances and provide non-official communication channels that can prove useful in a crisis.

The ILC was held simultaneously in five regions of the world -- Africa, Asia, North and South America, and Japan, as well as Europe and the Middle East -- to address best practices in Track II diplomacy to bring about Korea's peaceful reunification.

Eminent leaders, notably from the diplomatic, political, economic, and humanitarian fields, participated in the eight webinars of the Europe-Middle East ILC, two of which were co-hosted by partner organizations Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) and International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP).

[Session I - "Track 1.5 Diplomacy Initiatives with North Korea"](#)

June 27th, 2021, 10:00 CET



The ILC and its first session were opened by **Jacques Marion**, co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East (EUME).

In his opening remarks, **Dr. Katsumi Otsuka**, co-chair of UPF EUME, referred to the Korean War often being considered as the "Third World War." In this context he introduced the lives of the UPF co-founders, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, both of whom were born in North Korea and fled as refugees to South Korea.

As moderator of this first session, **Humphrey Hawksley**, an author, commentator, and former BBC foreign correspondent, introduced the two guest speakers and commented on the importance of Track 1.5 dialogues.

Hon. Glyn Ford, a former UK member of the European Parliament and the founder of the non-profit organization Track2Asia and the private company Polint, recalled that he made his first trip to North Korea in 1997 after being approached by DPRK diplomats from a UNESCO delegation. At that time, North Koreans were seeking food aid from the European Union. Upon his return, a European Parliament

resolution was drafted which led to the DPRK allowing an official EU delegation to visit North Korea. In 2010, he was asked to set up a political dialogue and gathered a group of senior politicians from the EU to travel to Pyongyang regularly to hold discussions.

He noted that North Koreans are not interested in early unification because it would mean assimilation, just like in the East German model of reunification, which they do not want. The North Koreans want the United States to allow them to grow by themselves and develop their economy. He added, "The only way to actually guarantee regime survival, from their perspective, has been the development of weapons of mass destruction." He concluded that any solution requires trust to be built step by step on both sides and the involvement of the international community.

Dr. Antonio Betancourt, a former secretary general of the Summit Council for World Peace (an organization established in 1987 by the UPF founders) and the former director of the UPF Office for Peace and Security, spoke of his experience in 1991 of conveying a message from Reverend Moon to North Korean leader Kim Il Sung through Cuba, with the purpose of bringing about reconciliation for the good of all Korean people and the peaceful reunification of Korea. Reverend Moon advised Dr. Betancourt that "you don't achieve anything by demonizing your adversaries; you have to give them the respect that you, in your bias, do not think they deserve. In the end this will bring results. You may be able to make your adversary into a partner."

Dr. Betancourt contributed to dialogue between North Korea and external powers. Indeed, he used his influence to encourage U.S. President Jimmy Carter to visit Pyongyang, through which tensions between the US and the DPRK were reduced. Dr. Betancourt was one of the few Westerners invited to attend President Kim Il Sung's funeral. Together with Col. Bo Hi Pak, one of Reverend Moon's assistants, he presented Father and Mother Moon's condolences to President Kim Jong Il at the funeral.

[Session 2 - Resources and Tools of Faith Based Organizations in Support of Reuniting the Korean People](#)

Date: July 27th, 2021 – 14:00 CET



This session was hosted jointly by UPF and its Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD).

The moderator, UPF-Russia President **Maria Nazarova**, warmly welcomed the attendees and introduced the speakers who would offer their perspectives on how faith-based organizations could support the reunification of the Korean people.

Archpriest Vladimir Fedorov, the scientific director of the Institute for the Study of Orthodox Resources for Peacemaking, Missiology, Ecumenism and New Religious Movements, and archpriest of the Russian Orthodox Church, stated that, in the modern era, humanity is facing many threats. To confront these threats and act creatively to resolve them, he said, we are obliged to unite. He predicted that the unification of the two Koreas will be achieved once the younger generation integrate into a culture of peace. He encouraged the creation of various opportunities and projects to promote spiritual and moral enlightenment.

Archpriest Fedorov spoke of the phrase "good will toward men" and its importance. To him, this phrase relates to those who see peace as a fundamental value for which they must work together in solidarity to solve problems. He concluded by explaining his change of heart toward other religious groups. He defined peacekeeping as not only the process of ending bloody wars but also the work of preventing conflicts, which itself requires investment into the sphere of education.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Kim, the co-chair of the Korean Clergy Leadership Conference, an organization that is affiliated with UPF, emphasized that peace on the Korean Peninsula will have a positive impact on peace around the world, as the peninsula historically has been a region of struggle between various world

powers. He spoke of Christianity's role in unifying Germany when it was divided, bringing about a substantial social change in the country.

Reverend Kim explained that Christianity in Korea has a role to play in unifying the nation, but said it must go beyond the evangelical dimension and political boundaries.

Reverend Kim spoke of Christianity not as an ideology or political belief but as a means to bring about unification through forgiveness and reconciliation. He described "unification" not as forcing two different things to become one, but as something that restores perfection from what is separated and progresses toward greater perfection. He concluded by encouraging the development of educational materials that support Korean cooperation and spread Christian values.

Rabbi Kevin De-Carli, president of the Interfaith Youth Council of the Geneva Interfaith Intercultural Alliance, recalled his experiences in reconciling divided groups and people, and his work with religious associations and the Swiss military. He spoke of the need to reconcile conflict on both the personal and institutional level.

Citing an old Jewish proverb, "Be a human. Don't be religious," he explained that empowerment can be gained from realizing that humans are not needy but are needed by God. He emphasized that this attitude can take the energy out of the vicious political and factionist arguments of our modern age.

Rabbi De-Carli said we must recognize our basic humanity, our human dignity, and realize that we are needed by others and needed by God. He concluded: "Be a human first in every action, and then be Christian, be Jewish, be Buddhist, be whatever, but a human first -- and that to the very best degree that you can."

Heiner Handschin, the coordinator of IAPD for Europe and the Middle East, began his talk by introducing IAPD, a primary association of UPF, which focuses on supplementing political leaders with the wisdom of religious leaders and taking into account the spiritual dimension of working toward peace.

Mr. Handschin talked about the efforts that UPF founders Rev. and Mrs. Moon have made in striving for world peace. He quoted from a speech given by Reverend Moon: "Although secular authorities rule most human societies, religion lies at the heart of most national and cultural identities. In fact, religious faith and devotion have far greater importance in most people's hearts than do political loyalties."

Mr. Handschin highlighted the strengths of a faith-based approach, which include sincere, selfless intentions, the ability to think outside the box and to come up with a visionary perspective on issues. He emphasized UPF's and IAPD's commitment to advocating and promoting the peaceful rapprochement of North and South Korea.

[Session III: "The Power of Humanitarian Initiatives in Overcoming the Division of the Korean Peninsula"](#)

Date: July 27th, 2021 – 16:00 CET



The session moderator, **Chantal Chételat Komagata**, the coordinator of UPF for Europe, explained why UPF has been organizing so many webinars on the Korean Peninsula. The UPF co-founders, born in what is today North Korea, shared the destinies of millions of refugees fleeing the North during the Korean War.

In 1991, they met with North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang, during which Reverend Moon clearly denounced worldwide communism. Their meeting led to numerous humanitarian initiatives aiming at a community of solidarity and mutual prosperity.

Thomas Fisler, a former director of cooperation in Pyongyang for the Swiss Agency for Development

and Cooperation, said that despite the persisting humanitarian needs in North Korea, where 40 percent of the population suffer from malnutrition, the country went into a total lockdown in January 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This measure brought international humanitarian aid to a halt and has exacerbated the plight of ordinary people. "North Korean lockdown measures are impacting the lives of ordinary people more than any externally imposed sanctions in the past," he said.

Looking ahead to the post-pandemic period, Mr. Fisler said that most INGOs and NGOs will need to negotiate all over again with the North Korean authorities, since all connections currently are cut. They will have to work in difficult conditions, as much material and infrastructure had to be left behind. Most importantly, communication channels should be kept open, and information should be gathered on what is happening in rural areas. Providing medical equipment and COVID-19 vaccines certainly will be one of the priorities, although solving children's malnutrition is even more urgent.

Dr. Alain Destexhe, former secretary general of Médecins Sans Frontières and former senator of Belgium (1995-2019), pointed out that humanitarian aid mostly is organized and delivered in a highly political context. Even when humanitarian organizations want to remain totally neutral and impartial, they cannot ignore the reality and merely concentrate on the suffering of the people, which is what he witnessed notably during the Bosnian War (1992-1995), as well as during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. "When the goal is murdering people, there is no room for humanitarian aid," he said.

As for North Korea, Dr. Destexhe said it is very important to maintain open channels and dialogue, however difficult this may be. At any time, minimal conditions must be met to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid. As humanitarian aid organizations cannot merely trust the government, they need to be able to assess the needs of the suffering people and have a minimum of control over what happens to the relief supplies they give, if they cannot deliver them themselves.

Brigitte Wada, president of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in France, spoke about the 1% Love Share Project, which was launched in 2001 in the belief that Korean reunification can be achieved if South Koreans and North Koreans change their hearts and become more affectionate to each other. The project, supported by women's associations worldwide, involves setting aside 1,000 won (approx. €1) each month to support the poor in the North.

WFWP has been helping, among others, North Korean women who have fled to the South to integrate into society. Furthermore, a World Assembly of Women Leaders was organized at North Korea's Mount Kumgang in 2007. It was the first international gathering of this magnitude held in North Korea to promote world peace and reunification. Proposals have been made for a "Peace Zone" near the Demilitarized Zone, where women of the two Koreas can meet and generate innovative strategies for peace and human development. Mrs. Wada concluded with the words of Reverend Moon, who said that "the unity of the Korean Peninsula cannot be achieved through political, economic, or military means, and none of these will succeed without another prerequisite: true love."

[Session IV: "The Emerging Power of Women's Diplomacy toward Sustainable Peace" The Emerging Power of Women's Diplomacy toward Sustainable Peace"](#)

Date: July 28th, 2021 – 10:00 CET



This session was hosted jointly by UPF, its International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), and its affiliated organization Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP).

Carolyn Handschin, coordinator of IAFLP for Europe and the Middle East, opened the session. "While today's discussion on successful models of women's diplomacy and mediation is aimed at the cause of reconciliation, peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, it is relevant everywhere," she said.

Dr. Sun Jin Moon, the senior vice president of WFWP International, said that the Koreans are victims of a geopolitical conflict embedded in a much larger global context. She emphasized the role of citizens --

rather than just leaders -- working not only through economics but also culture and the arts. Because relations between Seoul and Pyongyang have been hostage to geopolitical dynamics and external actors' influence, Dr. Moon said, the involvement of non-governmental actors in enhancing reconciliation between the two Korean communities is very important.

As the daughter of UPF and WFPW co-founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, she described her parents' extensive efforts toward Korean reunification. As a child, her mother was forced to flee North Korea during the Korean War but returned to the DPRK as an adult to speak with Chairman Kim Il Sung about the need for reunification. Sun Jin Moon said her parents have developed businesses and a tourist industry in the North. Now her mother is making plans for a world summit, including North Korea in the conversation, about achieving peace not just on the Korean Peninsula but worldwide.

H.E. Anneli Jäätteenmäki, the former prime minister of Finland (2003) and a member of the European Parliament (2004 to 2019), moderated the session.

H.E. Nayla Moawad, a former first lady of Lebanon (1989) who was also her nation's minister of social affairs (1992-2004), spoke about the current crisis in her country: There is a struggle for control, which has led to corruption and resultant poverty. Even wealthy families are now struggling to afford food, due to extortionate inflation. She said this is because of a lack of balance in leadership. Women are more empathetic in leading positions, and hence less corruption arises, she said. Lebanese people saw this when she served as first lady; they were surprised by her desire to serve all of Lebanon. This touched people's hearts, and she was very well received following the assassination of her husband. She then founded the René Moawad Foundation, which is successfully providing aid across Lebanon. If there were more women in power, she said, it would be easier to solve Lebanon's crisis and lead the country to success. This can be applied to other countries in conflict too, she said.

H.E. Neziha Labidi, former minister for women, family, children and senior citizens (2016-2020) in Tunisia, began by quoting the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza: "Peace is not merely the absence of war, it is the presence of justice." Statistically speaking, she said, women-led countries are more peaceful. Tunisia itself has a history of women in leadership, as well as laws that protect women against domestic and sexual violence, pioneering this in the Middle East. However, a change in culture takes a lot longer than a change in policy, she said, and the fight for equality is far from over.

Agreeing with the previous speaker, H.E. Nayla Moawad, she said the hearts of women are the key to a more compassionate, inclusive future. The key is to not get discouraged, even if you are outnumbered, she said, since willpower is more important than numbers.

Kholoud Wattar Kassem, the founder and president of the NGO Lebanese Women Towards Decision Making, considers empowering women in peacebuilding as her mission in life. Growing up in a conservative family and environment, she fought to go to university and work, even to drive her own car. She was empowered by the thought of pioneering the way for women that follow her. Her attempt to join parliament was met with cynicism by family members. Even her husband struggled to accept this reversal in dynamic. But after years of persistence and patience, her husband is now her main supporter. Women as public decision-makers is not the norm in Lebanon, but in the 2018 general elections 113 female candidates ran, a record-breaking number. This is a promising development, she said: women not waiting for peace but going out to actively seek it.

Session V: "The Potential of Private Sector Initiatives to Boost the North Korean Economy"

Date: July 28th, 2021 – 14:00 CET



This session was hosted jointly by UPF and its International Association for Peace and Economic Development (IAED).

After a short welcome, **Ole Toresen**, the IAED vice coordinator for Europe and the Middle East, introduced the session moderator, **Dr. Claude Béglé**, the president of the investment company Symbioswiss and a former member of the Swiss Parliament.

Paul Tjia, the founder of GPI Consultancy, a consultancy firm in the field of international outsourcing, organizes business missions and tours of North Korea for journalists. He said that North Korea clearly wants foreign investments and is interested in foreign trade. Private businesses can play an important role in building trust between North Korea and other countries. As an example of possible business, he emphasized online IT-related work on behalf of foreign clients.

Mr. Tjia has brought garment producers to North Korea, but currently, due to the UN security sanctions, the country is not allowed to export garments. He emphasized software development, which is rather complicated and needs a lot of communication, as important for bringing about successful results. In doing business, it is possible for people to visit North Korea, he said, but North Koreans also appreciate being invited to visit other countries.

Mark Tokola, the vice president of the Korea Economic Institute of America in Washington, a former U.S. senior foreign service officer, and former deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, said that for North Korea, the biggest problem is not denuclearization, but rather the terrible condition of its economy. This has been caused by droughts and floods in recent years, international sanctions, and now North Korea's self-imposed pandemic border controls, which have cut off imports, even of humanitarian assistance. However, 30 years of economic stagnation have been primarily due to North Korea's mismanagement of its economy.

To get the North Korean economy on its feet, Mr. Tokola said, fundamental reforms are necessary in state budgeting, banking, property legislation, commercial law, and many other areas. Without those reforms, neither North Korean entrepreneurs nor potential foreign investors will have much incentive to risk investments. As one of the very first steps, North Korea will have to show its government revenues and expenditures. Furthermore, in the long term there will need to be an economic relationship between North and South Korea, in which North Korea is not overwhelmed and destabilized by South Korea's economic strength.

Dr. Pablo Sanz, an assistant professor (PhD) in commercial law at the Spanish university ICADE, and a law expert in digital business regulation and corporate law, said there are several existing cases of foreign businesses, mostly Chinese and Russian firms, in joint ventures with the North Korean government. However, North Korea does not yet have a proper environment for foreign companies to invest. Indeed, it lacks laws, systems, and rules for dispute settlement, insurance, wages, and remittances. Furthermore, infrastructure -- roads, railroads, and telecommunications for the supply of electricity, gas, and water -- is extremely poor. The large-scale military spending and nuclear programs severely draw off the resources needed for investment and civilian consumption.

To the question "Why doesn't North Korea become more like Vietnam?" Professor Sanz answered that any North Korean attempt at liberalization will depend on the progress of ongoing nuclear negotiations. The lifting of sanctions, coupled with economic reforms and changes in national security policy and international relations, could help put the North Korean economy on a path of stable growth and economic integration.

Session VI: "Talking to the Heart: Culture as Peacemaker"

Date: July 28th, 2021 – 16:00 CET



This session was jointly hosted by UPF and its International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace (IAACP).

David Fraser Harris, the UPF secretary general for the Middle East, cited UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja

Han Moon's remarks that "people often think that politics moves the world, but that is not the case. It is culture and art that move the world. It is affection, not reason, that touches people in their innermost being." Mr. Fraser Harris then asked the audience "Is your heart ready?" with the hope that this session would provide more than talk and would open each participant's heart.

Dr. David Eaton, a composer, conductor, and producer currently based in South Korea, framed the vision of his work in the Greek (particularly the Platonic) concept of the unity and interrelatedness of beauty, truth, and goodness. There is a philosophical dimension of art as something being placed in the world. Artists don't create in a void, but in relation to their culture and society, he said. Therefore, they have a moral obligation to contribute to building a better society.

He related his personal experience in the intersection between the arts and peace movements. Between 2003 and 2011, he traveled to Israel to work on several musical projects related to peace. These projects in the Middle East created powerful communal experiences through music. A simple chant -- "Peace, *shalom, salam aleykum*" -- brought together people of all backgrounds at a very tumultuous time in Israel. "It is not a matter of just *talking* about art, but about *producing* art that can bring change," Dr. Eaton said. Artists have the power to make a change, and they do so by creating beauty.

Dr. Seung-ho Lee, president of the DMZ Forum, is the driving force behind a project to develop a naturally protected environment in the area of the Demilitarized Zone. The idea is to approach North-South Korean relations and potential reconciliation through the creation of a neutral natural and touristic area. After all, he said, tourism is an expression of culture and not just the economy. Dr. Lee's presentation was a reflection on the deep reasons behind such an apparently simple project. He began with a reflection on *Juche*, the DPRK's ideological base, as the expression of North Korea's mindset, not just politically, but toward economic struggles and hardships in general.

"Who can take off North Korea's nuclear cloak? The wind or the sun?" asked Dr. Lee, referring to the United States' "wind" policy in trying to make North Korea denuclearize. What he proposed instead is that we should aim at a "sun" strategy or project, for example by empowering North Korea to raising the standard of its national tourism, allowing foreigners to enter and its citizens to come and go more freely. Tourism is, after all, a natural way of cultural exchange.

Natalya Karpova, deputy of the Municipal District of Khasan in the Russian Far East, gave a broad view of Russian-North Korean relations from the perspective of someone who lives on the border. "People who live on the border with some states always feel that they are messengers of peace," she remarked. Therefore, in Khasan, a small town, there is a tradition of cultural exchange among the countries despite their differences. This is a story of friendship and connection, which included the visit of DPRK delegations, including Kim Il Sung's grandson; an international project Football Without Borders; peace projects that included planting trees at the border; schoolchildren's projects, and many others.

Mrs. Karpova explained how the dismantling of the Soviet Union in the 1990s actually created opportunities for travel to North Korea, especially for ordinary citizens like the residents of Khasan. This simple exchange allowed the town's population to be naturally in contact with North Korea. Currently, due to the pandemic, it is difficult to have exchanges and hold meetings. "But one thing we need to know," she concluded, "is that culture, education and sports will help preserve peace on our entire planet, and we must help this."

Dr. No Hi Pak, a senior advisor to UPF-Korea and former managing director of the Little Angels Children's Folk Ballet of Korea, described the Little Angels' vision and history as the materialization of what connects art to peace initiatives.

The Little Angels are a children's folk dance and singing company that was founded in 1962 by Rev. and Mrs. Moon with the mission to bring the spirit of peace around the world, while conveying Korea's beautiful traditional heritage. They have performed in over 120 countries, including North Korea, and in front of prominent figures such as U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1965 and Queen Elizabeth in 1971.

Wherever they perform, the Little Angels are children who serve as peacemakers and ambassadors, Dr. Pak said. "If they travel around the world seven times, the world will be at peace," a dignitary once proclaimed after watching their performance. As Dr. Pak sees it, art is an expression of inner character, and the Little Angels precisely express children's beauty and innocence, which after all are an expression of human beauty. "If you have a beautiful heart, your dance will be beautiful," he said. It is art that moves people's hearts.

Session VII: "Imagining a Unified World: The Youth's Contribution to Peace on the Korean Peninsula"

Date: July 29th, 2021 – 10:00 CET



This session was hosted jointly by UPF and the International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP), an affiliated organization.

Mélanie Komagata, a UPF intern and member of the committee of IAYSP-Switzerland, who is completing her graduate degree in East Asian studies, moderated the session. She started with a brief historical explanation of the division of Korea, as well as what has been done so far by Youth and Students for Peace on the Korean Peninsula and around the world. Young people have used their talents and skills -- notably, in sports, art, and culture -- to bring about harmony and peace, she said.

One example, which was shown in a video, was the United Korean Team at the World Table Tennis Championships in 1991, at which the Women's Team won the gold medal. When the athletes had to separate after the tournament, it brought attention to the heartbreak of division between the two Koreas.

Ju-hee Um of IAYSP-Korea and a member of the UniUS project, which is working toward Korean reunification, was introduced with a video titled "A Letter from a Unified Future." The film focused on the perspective of Korean citizens in a future unified Korea, expressing their gratitude to the people of the past who contributed to peace and the reunification on the Korean Peninsula.

Mrs. Um explained that the division of Korea is an ideological one, between communism and democracy, and therefore is politically complicated. However, the relationship between the people of North and South Korea doesn't have to be so difficult.

She emphasized the slogan "Peace Starts with Me," which expresses that every individual has a role to play in reunification. Rather than leaving it to the leaders, we all can take initiative by using our skills and talents, by joining an NGO, or by supporting organizations that contribute to peace. Even small actions can have a huge impact on one person's life, and we shouldn't underestimate that. She emphasized the importance of each investment with the motto "Little drops of water make the mighty ocean."

Andrei Litvinov, a Ukrainian living in South Korea, the founder of the Ethnic Korean Kids Center and "Culture DNA" and a teacher at the Senal school for foreign students, brought the perspective of non-Koreans to reunification. From an outsider's viewpoint, we may think that the two Koreas are worlds apart from each other. In fact, they share a common history of nearly 5,000 years, and the division is only very recent. Furthermore, the family portrait of Korea is quite sad, as families were divided. As young citizens of the world, we need to show that we care about others, he said, and not just "talk a lot, as it is now time for action."

Mr. Litvinov emphasized that regular people in this way can change the world -- especially young people, who have grown up in the age of social media and have witnessed everyday people become influencers and activists. We need to be intentional about how we use our influence, he said -- and why not use it to bring about peace? Furthermore, he said, we need to keep in mind that "we [foreigners] brought tanks to the Korean Peninsula and now [it is our responsibility] to bring peace" in Korea.

Jeong Hye Hassinen, the secretary general and former president of IAYSP for Europe and the Middle East, said that we live in an age in which borders are less and less significant. Therefore, we all are global citizens.

She admitted that practically, financially and politically, unification will be hard, but ultimately it will be beneficial on a global scale. If we can shift our focus from immediate, self-centered gain to the greater good, looking past ideological differences, we will see how important unification is.

In this sense, no leader, nor the Korean people, can achieve reunification alone, Mrs. Hassinen said. We all need to be involved. Ultimately, it is also a matter of values. These days Koreans place a lot of importance on academic success and economic growth. If we can remember our values, on a worldwide level, we can achieve reunification in our lifetimes.

Furthermore, as there is no holiday that is celebrated by all of Korea, not even Christmas Day or New Year, Mrs. Hassinen proposed that the day of Korea's reunification should become a holiday that is celebrated worldwide, representing world peace.

Session VIII: "Beyond Borders: The Peace Road Initiative"

Date: July 29th, 2021 – 15:00 CET



Elisabeth Cook, the president for Austria of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an organization that is affiliated with UPF, was the session moderator.

She introduced the session with a presentation on the historical background of the Peace Road initiative, starting with the 1981 proposal by Rev. and Mrs. Moon for an International Peace Highway. The founders had a vision of a global system of highways, railways and tunnels that would connect the world together, fostering interdependence and harmony. Mrs. Cook also detailed the various activities connected to the Peace Road Initiative, all with a single goal of tearing down barriers between communities and countries, including the division between North and South Korea.

Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, the co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, outlined the general idea of the International Peace Highway project. He recalled the words of Reverend Moon, stating that the world is spending too much on war and it is high time to work together for peace. Reverend Moon mentioned the possibility of building a tunnel that connects Korea and Japan, as well as another tunnel under the Bering Strait linking the Eurasian continent and North America.

Throughout the years, the Korea-Japan tunnel has gone through several rounds of development, Dr. Otsuka said. UPF-Japan also played an important role in this process, having formed the National Promotion Movement for Undersea Construction. He emphasized that the Peace Road goes beyond mere political benefit or international recognition. It enters a spiritual realm in which the value it represents is in the spotlight: tearing down walls and linking the people of the world.

Dr. Juraj Lajda, president of UPF in the Czech Republic, explained how living in a globalized world entails the responsibility to find ways to live in harmony with each other. He underlined the importance of standing up against the culture of resentment.

One example of that was the joint Peace Road project of three neighboring nations -- Austria, the Czech Republic, and Germany -- which have shared a common but sometimes stormy history and therefore need reconciliation, due to the acts of the Nazi regime during World War II and the division during the Cold War.

Although these three countries managed to overcome the past and now are cooperating with each other, Dr. Lajda said, there is still one nation that is a victim of ideological division between democracy and communism: Korea.

He expressed his hope that one day the Korean people can unite, just as these three nations did, that North and South Korea can overcome the obstacles of their shared history, and that the Peace Road can send a strong signal of hope to all Koreans.

Ali Laçej, the president of the UPF Albanians Peace Council (representing the Albanian diaspora), reported on the Balkan Peace Road event of 2018, which traveled through the Western Balkan region, with participants from Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Greece.

Mr. Laçej pondered that the Balkans, a historically divided region full of conflicts, developed into a place where three monotheistic religions, several languages and ethnicities live together and the connection

between people remained. He emphasized that Peace Road Balkans gives space for all religions and cultures to coexist in harmony and present themselves to each other, creating bridges among the peoples sharing their ideas and finding more ways to create a better world. "Without peace, you cannot help development," he explained.

Dr. Afsar Rathor, the president of the ecological organization LIOS-SOIL and a former UN official, said, "Peace cannot be achieved without reconciliation." He pointed out that one key element of lasting peace, the concept of human rights, often is misused for political benefits and for creating division among people.

Dr. Rathor related his personal experiences while serving in the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, observing that reconciliation brought peace and peace brought development.

As a message for future generations, Dr. Rathor concluded by saying that the road to peace is through forgiveness, forgetting the past, and looking into the future without prejudice. Korean reunification cannot take place through military means, he said. It needs to be based on dialogue, and this dialogue should take place in North Korea, and that is what the Peace Road initiative can contribute to.

Dmitry Samko, the coordinator of the Peace Road Initiative in Russia and the chairman of UPF-Moscow, said that even decades after World War I, international conflicts and polarization between the East and the West still rule the world. As a possible solution, he quoted UPF founder Reverend Moon, who presented the International Peace Highway as a grand project to bring the world together.

Mr. Samko reminisced about the first Peace Road programs that took place in Russia, an initiative that grew larger by the year and eventually connected Pyongyang and the DPRK to the project too.

He underlined that all individual contributions count for this world project. "The day is not far off when we will be able to run and visit each other without visas or limits," he said, quoting the words of the founder of this project.

Closing of the International Leadership Conference – July 29, 2021

Jacques Marion, the co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, concluded both the session and the ILC webinar series. He noted that throughout the eight sessions, esteemed speakers from different fields of expertise, cultures and religions offered their wisdom, bringing hope for the reunification of Korea.

Mr. Marion announced that a third series of webinars was planned from August 19 to 21 on the themes of "Prospects for Economic Development and Peace" and "Ideologies, Worldviews and International Relations."

Dr. Michael Balcomb, the regional president of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) for Europe and the Middle East, offered the closing remarks. He likened the border separating North and South Korea to the famous Hadrian's Wall, which divided the island of Great Britain 2,000 years ago. He noted that Hadrian's Wall -- the path of the 2021 Peace Road event in the United Kingdom - - even has roughly the same length as the Korean border.

Summarizing his realizations throughout the series of webinars, Dr. Balcomb said that the problems we experience in the world haven't changed much throughout history. However, he emphasized that we should not be dismayed because of this and should not hesitate to take action for this noble cause of reconciliation and peace.

According to the patterns we see, hard-power efforts have made little difference, he said, and soft power is required, with openness and dignity accorded to all sides. He stressed the importance of the cumulative efforts of all people, which can make a difference. "Peace starts with me," he emphasized, quoting UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to conclude the conference.



ILC2021-7 Session 1 - Track 1.5 Diplomacy Initiatives with North Korea

Written by UPF Europe and Middle East

27 July 2021



Jacques Marion, co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East (EUME)



Europe and the Middle East—The July 2021 International Leadership Conference started with a session titled “Track 1.5 Diplomacy Initiatives with North Korea.”

The eight sessions of the ILC were held online from July 27 to 29, 2021, under the title “Toward the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Best Practices in Track II Diplomacy.”

The first session on the morning of July 27 had a total of 230 participants for the “live” broadcast, with an additional 363 viewers on Facebook.

Track 1.5 dialogues are conversations that include a mix of government officials—participating in an unofficial capacity—and non-governmental experts. Neither Track 1.5 nor Track II discussions carry the official weight of traditional diplomacy, yet they offer a private, open environment for individuals to build trust, hold conversations and discuss solutions in a way that their official counterparts sometimes cannot. Trusted figures often can glean better insights and nuances and provide non-official communication channels that can prove useful in a crisis.

The panelists, Hon. Glyn Ford and Dr. Antonio Betancourt, offered their own experiences of Track 1.5 diplomacy with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK – North Korea), in the context of parliamentary as well as non-governmental initiatives.



Mr. Jacques Marion, the co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East (EUME), opened the three-day webinar, welcoming the participants to this first session.

Mr. Jacques Marion,



Dr. Georgy Toloraya, Director, East Asia section, Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

In his opening remarks, **Dr. Katsumi Otsuka**, co-chair of UPF EUME, mentioned that the Korean War often is spoken of as the “Third World War.” In this context he provided an introduction to the lives of the UPF founders, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon (Father Moon) and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon (Mother Moon), who both were born in North Korea and came to South Korea as refugees.

Dr. Otsuka said, “The UPF founders are both victims of the World War and communist revolution, and this motivated their work for world peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula.”

He underlined a milestone in their lives when in December 1991 they visited Pyongyang to carry out peace talks with Supreme Leader Kim Il Sung. Now, 30 years later, Mother Moon has a strong hope to visit North Korea again to commemorate that first visit.

Dr. Otsuka drew the listeners’ attention to the fact that July 27 was the anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement signed by North Korean, Chinese and United States representatives in 1953. He added that the time has come for the world to cooperate for the peaceful reunification of Korea.

Finally, he described some UPF activities, in particular the Peace Road Initiative and the Korea-Japan Undersea Tunnel Project, which are contributing to overcoming hostile relations while fostering dialogue.



Mr. Humphrey Hawksley, Author, Commentator; Former BBC Foreign Correspondent, UK

The moderator for this first session was **Humphrey Hawksley**, an author, commentator, and former BBC foreign correspondent. He introduced both speakers and offered some comments on the importance of Track 1.5 dialogues. As he put it, they comprise conversations that include a mix of government officials participating unofficially and non-governmental experts, while offering a private, open environment for dialogue, trust, and brainstorming.



Hon. Glyn Ford, Former UK Member of the European Parliament; Founder, Track 2 Asia, UK

Hon. Glyn Ford is a former UK member of the European Parliament (1984-2009) and the founder of the non-governmental organization Track2Asia as well as the private company Polint. He is also the author of the book *Talking with North Korea: Ending the Nuclear Standoff* (2018).

He spoke about a process of Track 1.5 diplomacy in which he took part and how it affected him. Over a period of more than 20 years, he has had the opportunity to enter North Korea about 50 times. He made his first trip there in 1997 on an unofficial basis when he was a member of the European Parliament, after being approached by DPRK diplomats from a UNESCO delegation. At that time, North Koreans were seeking food aid from the European Union. Upon his return, the European Parliament drafted a resolution that eventually led to North Korea allowing an official EU delegation to visit North Korea. Subsequently substantial EU food aid was delivered to the DPRK (“a total of 500 million Euros in humanitarian assistance to the DPRK during the decade up to 2010,” as Hon. Ford wrote on p.112 of his book *Talking with North Korea*).

In 2010, after being asked to set up a political dialogue, Hon. Ford gathered a group of senior politicians from the EU to travel to Pyongyang regularly to hold discussions with the head of the international department of the Workers’ Party of Korea.

Hon. Ford spoke about his appreciation of the Korean situation, particularly that of Pyongyang and North Korea, as a result of his experiences there. North Koreans are not interested in early unification, he said, because it would mean assimilation, which they do not want. He drew a comparison to the East German model of reunification, which happened as a result of a collapsed state, which is not the case of North Korea. The North Koreans want the United States to “get off their back” and allow them to grow and to develop their economy.

North Korea’s nuclear program “is driven by weakness, not by strength,” he said, stating that North Korea has lost the

arms race. He added that “the only way to actually guarantee regime survival, from their perspective, has been the development of weapons of mass destruction.” He pointed out that any solution to this conflict will be a long-term process which requires that trust be built step by step on both sides, with the involvement of the international community.



Dr. Antonio Betancourt,
Former Director, UPF
Office for Peace and
Security, US

Humphrey Hawksley introduced **Dr. Antonio Betancourt** by recounting their first meeting in Beijing in 1994, at a time when tensions were high between the United States and North Korea. Dr. Betancourt—the former secretary general of the Summit Council for World Peace (a grouping of current and former heads of state established by the UPF founders) and the former director of the UPF Office for Peace and Security—had cut short their first encounter with an immediate invitation to go with him to join an influential group that was seeking to “avert a war” on the Korean Peninsula.

Dr. Betancourt continued the story, adding the context that DPRK President Kim Jong Il had passed a message to the Moon family, through Dr. Betancourt, that they should leave Seoul because war was imminent. The US threat to sanction remittances from DPRK sympathizers in Japan, approximately \$600 million to \$700 million annually, was seen as a *casus belli* in Pyongyang. Dr. Betancourt used his influence to encourage former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to visit Pyongyang, despite the Clinton administration’s opposition. He also pushed for the television news network CNN to accompany him, despite the DPRK’s initial reluctance, to be able to report the results of talks directly and transparently. Through this effort, tensions were reduced between the United States and the DPRK.

Dr. Betancourt went on to speak about the meeting that Father and Mother Moon had with the DPRK’s founding president, Kim Il Sung, in 1991. In the late 1940s, Father Moon was tortured during a campaign to remove religious leaders from communist North Korea. He then was incarcerated, notably in the Hungnam communist labor camp. Nevertheless, Sun Myung Moon was freed and could travel to the South, thanks to the intervention of the UN troops under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur—whose staff officers included Alexander Haig, who later became supreme allied commander of NATO and U.S. secretary of state under President Ronald Reagan. Father Moon became a leading proponent of Victory over Communism internationally and a well-known campaigner for South Korea to be aware of the threat of the DPRK.

In 1991, Father Moon asked Dr. Betancourt to convey a message of rapprochement to President Kim Il Sung. His goal was for their reconciliation to facilitate cooperation for the good of all Korean people, leading to the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Father Moon advised Dr. Betancourt: “You don’t achieve anything by demonizing your adversaries; you have to give them the respect that you, in your bias, do not think they deserve. In the end this will bring results. You may be able to make your adversary into a partner.”

Visiting several DPRK Embassies did not bring any constructive results. Dr. Betancourt realized that another approach was needed, given the DPRK policy at the time toward Father Moon. The chairman of the Summit Council for World Peace, former Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo, suggested contacting Cuban President Fidel Castro, who had friendly relations with President Kim Il Sung and could encourage a bold move for reconciliation. This approach worked, and visas were issued in April 1991.

On arrival in Pyongyang, Dr. Betancourt was subjected to a three-day grilling by his North Korean hosts. Unsurprisingly, as a dual citizen of Colombia and the United States (both of which were members of the UN Forces fighting North Korea in the Korean War) and an envoy of Father Moon, he was a *persona non grata* and treated very suspiciously. After three days, however, he felt that his hosts were beginning to understand that this visit for rapprochement was genuine. When this mood changed, he began to speak of how Father and Mother Moon’s support could benefit North Korea.

First, he agreed to work to raise the level of the discussion of DPRK issues in Washington, D.C. This was achieved with the support of the Summit Council for World Peace network and the influential Admiral William J. Crowe. Second, he offered to bring to Pyongyang Dr. Robert Lee from the World Bank, who had advised China on reforms that had led to a successful restructuring of the Chinese economy.

A number of other ideas were discussed that later formed a 10-point communique following the visit of Father and Mother Moon to North Korea in December 1991. The Potonggang Hotel and a peace center were built in Pyongyang. A car assembly/manufacturing plant “costing hundreds of millions of dollars” was built in the city of Nampo, which recently was donated to North Korea. All were run, without profit, for the sake of North Korea.

This turned out to be the first of 16 visits to the DPRK by Dr. Betancourt, who developed a close relationship with President Kim. In his final days President Kim proposed that research be made into *Juche* thought and the teachings of Father Moon that were founded in what is now North Korea. The purpose of this project was to better understand the manifest historical destiny of the region. President Kim’s demise forestalled this effort.

Dr. Betancourt became one of the few Westerners invited to attend President Kim’s funeral. Together with Col. Bo Hi Pak, one of Father Moon’s assistants, he presented Father and Mother Moon’s condolences to President Kim Jong Il

at the funeral.

During the webinar's question-and-answer session, numerous interesting questions were brought forward on topics such as the impact of COVID-19 in relation to the famine in North Korea; the possibility of a peace treaty; language differences between North and South Korea; Russia's role in the conflict; Donald Trump's peace initiative with North Korea; and whether the dream of reunification is still alive in the people's minds.

Finally, asked about the future of the Korean Peninsula, Dr. Betancourt evoked Reverend Moon's calls for adopting a heart of love toward one's enemies. Hoping that the world's attention can return to that part of the world once the pandemic is over, Dr. Betancourt added that the issue will be solved only if big nations have an (economic) interest in doing so.

Hon. Ford emphasized the need for any solution to satisfy both China and the United States. When dealing with North Korea, he said, it is very important to adopt a bipartisan approach which is long-term and guarantees stability beyond government changes both in South Korea and the United States.

ILC2021 INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ILC2021
THINK TANK 2022
TOWARD PEACE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA
JULY 27-29, 2021 UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION LIVE WEBINAR

Session I
July 27th, 2021, 10:00 - 11:30 CET

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Speakers

- Dr. Katsumi Otsuka
Chairman, UPT
Europe & Middle East
- Mr. Humphrey Hawksley
Author, Commentator
Former BBC Foreign Correspondent, UK
- Hon. Glyn Ford
Former UK Member of the European Parliament;
Founder, Track 2 Asia, UK
- Dr. Antonio Betancourt
Former Director,
UPT Office for Peace and Security, USA

SESSION 1

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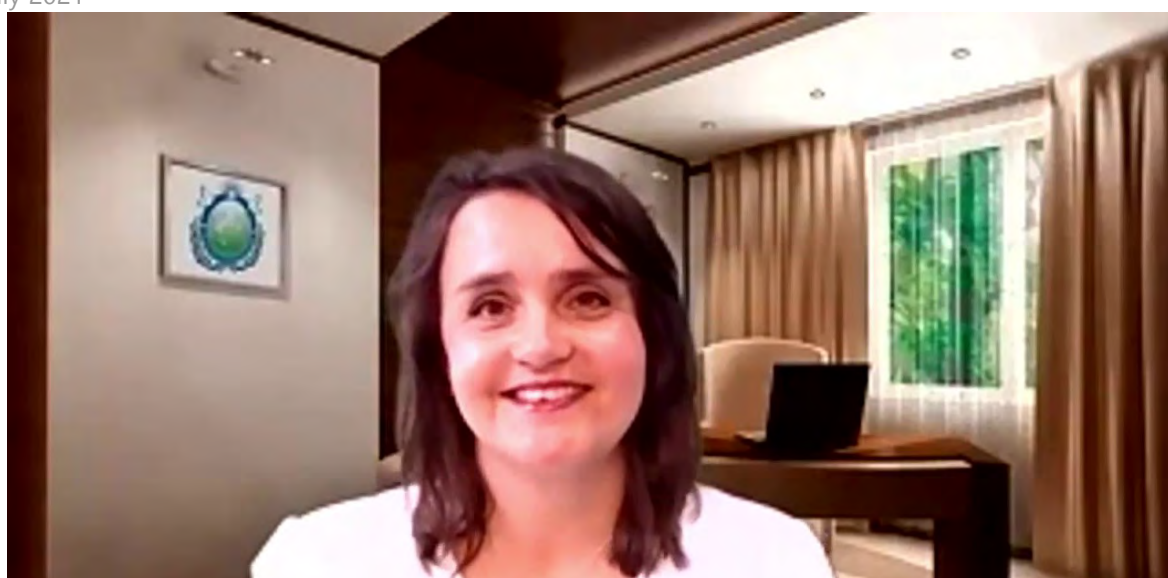
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ILC2021-7 Session 2 - Resources and Tools of Faith Based Organizations in Support of Reuniting the Korean People

ILC2021-7 Session 2 - Resources and Tools of Faith Based Organizations in Support of Reuniting the Korean People

Written by Joshua McGuigan, press officer, FFWPU-UK

27 July 2021



Mrs. Maria Nazarova, President, UPF Russia



Europe and the Middle East—The second session of the July 2021 International Leadership Conference was titled “Resources and Tools of Faith-Based Organizations in Support of Reuniting the Korean People.”

From July 27 to 29, 2021, eight sessions of the ILC were held online under the title “Toward the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Best Practices in Track II Diplomacy.”

The second session, held on July 27, was co-hosted by UPF with its Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD). There were a total of 126 participants for the “live” broadcast, with an additional 186 viewers on Facebook.

This focus of this webinar was to highlight the resources of faith-based organizations (FBOs) that could be instrumental in fostering peace, rapprochement and ultimately reunification of the divided Korean people. The panelists presented tools for conflict resolution, reconciliation, peacebuilding, and reconstruction that are unique to a faith-based approach, which sees humanity as one large family under a benevolent God.

The moderator, UPF-Russia President **Maria Nazarova**, warmly welcomed the attendees and introduced the speakers.



Mrs. Maria Nazarova,
President, Universal



Archpriest Vladimir Fedorov, Scientific Director of the Institute for the Study of Orthodox Resources for Peacemaking, Missiology, Ecumenism and New Religious Movements; Archpriest, Russian Orthodox Church

Archpriest Vladimir Fedorov of the Russian Orthodox Church, the scientific director of the Institute for the Study of Orthodox Resources for Peacemaking, Missiology, Ecumenism and New Religious Movements, addressed the webinar through a recorded message.

In the modern era, he said, humanity is facing many threats. To confront these threats and act creatively to resolve them, we are obliged to unite. Archpriest Fedorov said the unification of the two Koreas will be achieved once the younger generation integrate into a culture of peace. He encouraged the creation of opportunities and projects to promote spiritual and moral enlightenment.

Archpriest Fedorov spoke of the phrase “Goodwill toward men”—or, as it is often translated, “People of good will”—and its importance. To him, the phrase relates to those who see peace as a fundamental value for which they must work with one another in solidarity, solving problems together. He described his change of heart toward other religious groups and concluded his talk by stating that peacekeeping is not only the process of ending bloody wars but also the work of preventing conflicts, which requires investment into the sphere of education.



Rev. Dr. Stephen Kim, Co-Chairman Korean Clergy Leadership Conference, Seoul, South Korea

Rev. Dr. Stephen Kim, the co-chair of the Korean Clergy Leadership Conference, an interfaith organization that is affiliated with UPF, emphasized that peace on the Korean Peninsula will have a positive impact on peace around the world, as the peninsula historically has been a region of struggle between various world powers.

He spoke of the role Christianity had in unifying a divided Germany and the substantial social change that it brought about in that country. Christianity also must play a role in unifying Korea, he said, but it must go beyond the evangelical dimension and political boundaries.

Rev. Kim spoke of Christianity not as an ideology or political belief but as a means to bring about unification through forgiveness and reconciliation. He defined “unification” not as forcing two different things to become one, but aiming for integration that restores perfection from what is separated and progresses toward greater perfection. He concluded his talk by encouraging the development of educational materials that support Korean cooperation and spread the values of Christianity.



Rabbi Kevin De-Carli, President, GIA Interfaith Youth Council, Switzerland

Rabbi Kevin De-Carli, president of the Interfaith Youth Council of the Geneva (Switzerland) Interfaith Intercultural Alliance, recalled his experiences in reconciling divided groups and people, and his work with religious associations and the Swiss military. He spoke of reconciling conflict on both the personal and institutional level.

He cited an old Jewish proverb: “Be a human. Don’t be religious.” Empowerment can be gained from realizing that we as humans are not needy but are needed by God, he said. This attitude can take the energy out of the vicious political and factionist arguments that take place in our modern age, he said.

Rabbi De-Carli emphasized that we must recognize our basic humanity, our human dignity, and realize that we are needed by others and needed by God. He concluded: “Be a human first in every action, and then be Christian, be Jewish, be Buddhist, be whatever, but a human first and that to the very best degree that you can.”



The final speaker, **Heiner Handschin**, the coordinator of IAPD for Europe and the Middle



Mr. Heiner Handschin,
Coordinator IAPD
Europe and Middle East

East, gave a presentation introducing IAPD, a primary association of UPF which focuses on supplementing political leaders with the wisdom of religious leaders and taking into account the spiritual dimension of working toward peace.

Mr. Handschin talked about the efforts that the UPF founders have made in striving for world peace. He quoted a speech given by Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon: "Although secular authorities rule most human societies, religion lies at the heart of most national and cultural identities. In fact, religious faith and devotion have far greater importance in most people's hearts than do political loyalties."

The strengths of a faith-based approach, Mr. Handschin said, include sincere, selfless intentions, the ability to think outside the box and to come up with a visionary perspective on issues. He ended his talk by emphasizing UPF's and IAPD's commitment to advocating and promoting the peaceful rapprochement of North and South Korea.

The second ILC webinar concluded with a question-and-answer session moderated by Mrs. Nazarova. Perceptive questions were posed to the panelists, who provided insightful answers in response.

The first question was "What resources of religions and faith-based organizations can be applied in the process of the peaceful reunification of Korea?" Rev. Dr. Stephen Kim responded that "just today, the communication channel was reconnected between the two Koreas" after almost one year after it had been broken off. This shows we need patience, which is one of the virtues that religions teach, Dr. Kim said. Young people in South Korea nowadays may doubt the need for reunification. Therefore, religions have a role to play in teaching them why it is needed—because the Korean Peninsula is linked to world peace, he said.

Another question was how North and South Korea will be able to unite despite their vastly differing ideologies. Mr. Handschin suggested we look beyond ideology. The issue of interfaith will have to be addressed and confronted, he said. Over the thousands of years of their history, the Korean people have been searching for God, he said.

Another question concerned the religious concepts that can be a unifying factor and basis for the reunification of the two Koreas. Rabbi Kevin De-Carli emphasized the idea of the universal family, a concept highlighted by most of the panelists. The fundamental religious insight that we are all created by God, that we are one human family—no matter the religion, race, culture or skin color—is an especially powerful unifying thought, he said.

Mrs. Nazarova brought the program to an end by thanking the panelists and attendees who participated in the online webinar.

ILC2021 INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ILC2021
THINK TANK 2022
TOWARD PEACE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

JULY 27-29, 2021 UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION LIVE WEBINAR

Session II
July 27th, 2021, 14:00 - 15:30 CET

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Moderator: Mrs. Maria Nazarova
Archpriest Vladimir Fedorov
Peacemaking, Missiology, Ecumenism and New Religious Movements

Mr. Heiner Handschin
Coordinator IAPD Europe and Middle East

Rabbi Kevin De-Carli
President, GITA Interfaith Youth Council, Switzerland

Rev. Dr. Stephen Kim
Co-Chairman Korean Clergy Leadership Conference, Seoul, South Korea

00:00

SESSION 2

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ILC2021-7 Session 3 - The Power of Humanitarian Initiatives in Overcoming the Division of the Korean Peninsula

ILC2021-7 Session 3 - The Power of Humanitarian Initiatives in Overcoming the Division of the Korean Peninsula

Written by Yvo Bruffaerts, UPF West Europe subregional coordinator

27 July 2021



Europe and the Middle East—The third session of the July 2021 International Leadership Conference was titled “The Power of Humanitarian Initiatives in Overcoming Division of the Korean Peninsula.”

From July 27 to 29, 2021, eight sessions of the ILC were held online under the title “Toward the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Best Practices in Track II Diplomacy.”

The third session, held on July 27, had a total of 116 participants for the “live” broadcast, with an additional 289 viewers on Facebook.

The panelists considered how institution or state-level humanitarian initiatives, beyond partisanship, can contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula by overcoming division and differences. They talked about best practices, as well as the impact of sanctions imposed by the UN and the lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The panelists offered recommendations for building mutual trust between North and South Korea, and ways to envision a peaceful future for all.



Chantal Chételat Komagata, coordinator of UPF for Europe and moderator for this webinar, explained in her introduction why UPF has been organizing so many webinars about the Korean Peninsula. The UPF founders, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, were born in what is today North Korea and shared the destinies of millions of refugees fleeing the North during the Korean War. In 1991, they were able to return to North Korea to meet with Supreme Leader Kim Il Sung. During this meeting Reverend Moon clearly denounced worldwide communism. Their meeting led to numerous humanitarian initiatives aiming at a community of solidarity and mutual prosperity.

Mrs. Chantal Chételat Komagata, Coordinator

A short documentary was shown, which featured humanitarian activities in Pyongyang of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The video showed two projects in the countryside: cultivating on sloping land while protecting against erosion and



Mr. Thomas Fisler,
Former Director,
Cooperation in
Pyeongyang for the
Swiss Agency for
Development and
Cooperation, FDFA,
Switzerland

Thomas Fisler, a former director of cooperation in Pyongyang for the SDC, said that despite the persisting humanitarian needs in North Korea, where 40 percent of the population are suffering from malnutrition, the country went into a total lockdown in January 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This measure brought international humanitarian aid to a halt.

The self-imposed isolation, travel restrictions for the population, and the restrictions on the much-needed private market economy have exacerbated the plight of ordinary people in North Korea, especially in rural areas. "North Korean lockdown measures are impacting the lives of ordinary people more than any externally imposed sanctions in the past," he said. The people, however, are extremely resilient and show no aversion to the authorities, he said.

Looking ahead to the post-pandemic period, Mr. Fisler said that most INGOs and NGOs will need to negotiate all over again with the North Korean authorities, since all connections currently are cut. They will have to work in difficult conditions, as much material and infrastructure had to be left behind in January 2020. Traveling most likely will still be impacted by quarantine restrictions. Most importantly, communication channels should be kept open, and information should be gathered on what is happening in rural

areas.

Providing medical equipment and COVID-19 vaccines certainly will be one of the priorities, although solving children's malnutrition is even more urgent. Mr. Fisler said that "we can do nothing more than wait until the border opens, and then hopefully the government will allow to bring in some assistance. ... The UN agencies could be at the forefront."



Dr. Alain Destexhe,
Former Secretary
General, Médecins Sans
Frontières; Senator
(1995-2019), Belgium

Dr. Alain Destexhe, former secretary general of Médecins Sans Frontières and a former senator of Belgium (1995-2019), pointed out that humanitarian aid mostly is organized and delivered in a highly political context. Even when humanitarian organizations want to remain totally neutral and impartial, they cannot ignore this reality and merely concentrate on the suffering of the people. He knows from experience that many do not take this fact into account sufficiently.

He gave the example of the Bosnian War (1992-1995). An enclave in Srebrenica with approximately 40,000 people, most of whom were Muslims, was surrounded by Serbian military forces. The latter gave organizations such as the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières access to the enclave only after they had been given the same quantity of food and drugs as that intended for the people inside the enclave. Having to accept such an unfair deal was the political price that had to be paid to have access to the starving people.

Dr. Destexhe also mentioned the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. One day, all the Tutsi staff and patients in the hospital of Butare were murdered and only Hutu staff and patients

remained. All further humanitarian aid was stopped, as the organization he was working for did not want to become an accomplice of the perpetrators. "When the goal is murdering people, there is no room for humanitarian aid," he said.

As to North Korea, Dr. Destexhe said it is very important to maintain open channels and dialogue, however difficult this may be. At any time, minimal conditions must be met to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid. As humanitarian aid organizations cannot merely trust the government, they need to be able to assess the needs of the suffering people and have a minimum of control over what happens to the relief supplies they give, if they cannot deliver themselves.



Mrs. Brigitte Wada,

Brigitte Wada, the president of the French chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an organization that is affiliated with UPF, said that the federation was founded by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her late husband, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, in 1992. In 2001, the 1% Love Share Project was launched with the belief that reunification on the Korean Peninsula can be achieved if the South and North Koreans begin to regard each other with greater affection. The 1% Love Share Project involves setting aside 1,000 Korean won (approximately 1 euro) each month to support the poor in the North. This initiative has been supported by women's associations worldwide.

WFWP-Korea participated in the reforestation of North Korea's Kaesong region in 2005 and provided emergency aid to North Korean flood victims in 2006 and 2008, among

other service projects. Since 2010, however, it has become difficult to work in North Korea, due to the tense diplomatic relations between the North and the South. WFPW therefore has been helping North Korean women who have fled to the South to integrate into society.

Furthermore, WFPW in 2007 organized a World Assembly of Women Leaders at North Korea's Mount Kumgang. It was the first international gathering of this magnitude, promoting world peace and the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, to be held in North Korea. Proposals were made to create a "Peace Zone" near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), where women from North and South Korea can meet and generate innovative strategies for peace and human development.

Thanks to its contributions to the rapprochement on the Korean Peninsula, WFPW-Korea is now a member of the Korean National Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation, which has a membership of some 200 NGOs, and a counterpart in North Korea.

To conclude, Mrs. Wada reminded us of the words of Reverend Moon, who said, "The unity of the Korean Peninsula cannot be achieved through political, economic, or military means, and none of these will succeed without another prerequisite: true love."

During the question-and-answer session some interesting questions from the audience were brought forward, such as whether humanitarian aid organizations are a normal phenomenon or rather a tool to compensate for the shortcomings of the state. Dr. Destexhe said that these past 30 or 40 years have seen the development of NGOs and independent relief organizations in many fields. They are a strong pillar in society, he said.

To the question of when North Korea will reopen its borders and what may happen then, Mr. Fisler estimated it would take one or two more years. He emphasized the need for confidence-building and trust-building measures as a way to pursue humanitarian work in the country. He also warned that funding for North Korea may not be a high priority once the global pandemic is over and that "reopening humanitarian operational space will be a cumbersome process."

Questioned whether North Korea refuses humanitarian aid for ideological reasons or out of fear, Mrs. Wada responded that deep in their hearts the North Koreans have some pride. Therefore the authorities need to be approached differently, she said. They definitely do not want to be pitied by foreign aid workers. Nevertheless, they did appreciate the projects of the WFPW in the past, she said, and for that reason these will be continued as soon as possible.

Dr. Destexhe added that much depends on whom humanitarian organizations can communicate with. They often have to go through the official channels, while informal contact with ordinary citizens is discouraged or simply made impossible.

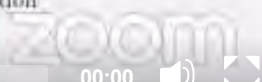


The moderator, Mrs. Komagata, ended on a positive note by saying that ten months after the inter-Korean hotlines were severed, when the North destroyed a joint liaison office in June 2020, the leaders of both countries resumed communication by letter in April, and exactly on the day of this seminar, North and South Korea restored their direct communication hotlines—a concrete step to restoring trust and confidence.

Recommendations


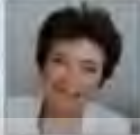
Humanitarian organizations should maintain open channels with the respective North Korean missions abroad during the lockdown and make sure funds are available afterward.

Delivering aid should never be without conditions. There has to be a compromise between a regime's desire to control everything and the necessity for the humanitarian organization to assess the needs and to control how the aid is being given.

It is important to continue the dialogue over time and to make constant efforts to help, not abandoning it even in the face of difficulties.

SESSION STARTS IN: **03:19**  00:00  

Speakers

	Dr. Alain Destexhe Former Secretary General, Médecins Sans Frontières; Senator (1995-2019), Belgium		Mrs. Brigitte Wada President Women's Federation for World Peace, France
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Cooperation, FDFA,
Switzerland

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ILC2021-7 Session 4 - The Emerging Power of Women's Diplomacy toward Sustainable Peace

ILC2021-7 Session 4 - The Emerging Power of Women's Diplomacy toward Sustainable Peace

Written by Simran Rai, UPF-UK and YSP-UK

28 July 2021



Mrs. Carolyn Handschin



Europe and the Middle East—The fourth session of the July 2021 International Leadership Conference explored the potential of women leaders as peacebuilders.

From July 27 to 29, 2021, eight sessions of the ILC were held online under the title "Toward the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Best Practices in Track II Diplomacy."

The fourth session, held on July 28, was titled "The Emerging Power of Women's Diplomacy toward Sustainable Peace." UPF and its International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) organized the session with the support of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an organization that is affiliated with UPF.

A total of 198 participants attended the "live" broadcast, with an additional 614 viewers on Facebook.

Prominent women in leadership around the world, included current and former first ladies and parliamentarians, offered their expertise on the topic of women in diplomacy and their unique perspective on the role of women in peacebuilding. They also spoke about their successes and challenges they faced in serving their nation.



Carolyn Handschin, the IAFLP coordinator for Europe and the Middle East, opened the session. "While today's discussion on successful models of women's diplomacy and mediation is aimed at the cause of reconciliation, peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, it is relevant everywhere," Mrs. Handschin said.

Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, Coordinator for Europe & Middle



Dr. Sun Jin Moon,
Senior Vice President,
Women's Federation for
World Peace
International

Dr. Sun Jin Moon, the senior vice president of WFPW International, said the Koreans are victims of a geopolitical conflict embedded in a much larger global context. She emphasized the role of citizens—rather than just leaders—in Korean reunification, working not only through economics but also culture and the arts. Because relations between Seoul and Pyongyang have been hostage to geopolitical dynamics and external actors' influence, Dr. Moon said, the involvement of non-governmental actors in enhancing reconciliation between the two Korean communities is very important.

As the daughter of UPF and WFPW co-founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, she described her parents' extensive efforts for Korean reunification. As a child, her mother was forced to flee North Korea during the Korean War but returned to the DPRK as an adult to speak with President Kim Il Sung about the need for reunification. Sun Jin Moon said her parents have developed businesses and a tourist industry in the North. Now her mother is making plans for a world summit, including North Korea in the conversation, about achieving peace not just on the Korean Peninsula but worldwide.



H.E. Anneli
Jäätteenmäki, Prime
Minister (2003), Finland

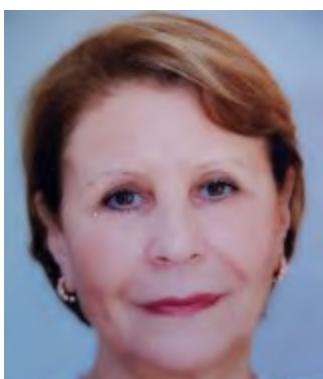
H.E. Anneli Jäätteenmäki, the former prime minister of Finland (2003) and a member of the European Parliament (2004 to 2019), moderated the session.



H.E. Nayla Moawad,
First Lady (1989),
Former First Lady,
Minister of Social
Affairs (2005-2008),
Lebanon

H.E. Nayla Moawad, the former first lady of Lebanon (1989) and her nation's minister of social affairs (1992-2004) spoke about the current crisis in her country. The struggle for control leads to corruption and resultant poverty, she said. Even wealthy families are now struggling to afford food due to extortionate inflation. This is because of a lack of balance in leadership, she said. Because women are more empathetic, when they are in leadership positions, there is less corruption, she said.

The Lebanese people saw this when she served as first lady and were surprised by her desire to serve all of Lebanon. This touched people's hearts, and she was very well received following the assassination of her husband. She then founded the René Moawad Foundation, which is successfully providing aid across Lebanon. If there were more women in power, she said, it would be easier to solve Lebanon's crisis and lead the country to success. This can be applied to other countries in conflict too.



H.E. Neziha Labidi, a former minister for women, family, children and senior citizens (2016-2020) in Tunisia, began by quoting the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza: "Peace is not merely the absence of war, it is the presence of justice."

Statistically speaking, women-led countries are more peaceful, H.E. Labidi said. Tunisia has a history of women in leadership, she said, as well as laws that protect women from domestic and sexual violence, pioneering this in the Middle East. However, a change in culture takes a lot longer than a change in policy, she said, and the fight for equality is far from over.

H.E. Naziha Labidi,
Minister for Women,
Family, Children and
Senior Citizens (2016-
2020), Tunisia

Agreeing with the previous speaker, H.E. Nayla Moawad, she said the hearts of women are the key to a more compassionate, inclusive future. The key is to not get discouraged, she said; even if you are outnumbered, willpower is more important than numbers.



Kholoud Wattar Kassem, the founder and president of the NGO Lebanese Women Towards Decision Making, said that empowering women in peacebuilding is her mission in life. Growing up in a conservative family and environment, she fought to go to university and work, even to drive her own car. She was empowered by the thought of pioneering the way for women that follow her.

Her attempt to join parliament was met with cynicism by family members, she said. Even her husband struggled to accept this reversal in dynamic. But after years of persistence and patience, her husband is now her main supporter.

Although it is not the norm in Lebanon to have women as public decision-makers, 113 female candidates ran in the 2018 general elections, a record-breaking number. This is a promising development: women not waiting for peace but going out to actively seek it.

Mrs. Kholoud Wattar
Kassem, Founder &
President, Lebanese
Women Towards
Decision Making NGO,
Lebanon

Marcia De Abreu, the chair of WFPW-Spain and the secretary general of WFPW-Europe, moderated the question-and-answer session. H.E. Nayla Moawad could not join the Q&A due to Internet complications, related to the current difficulties in Lebanon with electricity.

Asked how to activate more women—especially in South Korea, which stands in the last ranks of women in decision-making positions in society—H.E. Labidi stated that it is essential to create specific floors for women’s political engagement and to promote women in decision-making positions, either in governmental bodies or in civil society. In particular, she suggested that local and small-scale projects be implemented in towns to engage local youth and raise their awareness of environmental issues, as today’s young generations will deal with an increased competition for resources in the coming decades.

A second question was addressed to both H.E. Labidi and Mrs. Wattar Kassem regarding prospects for the reconciliation of the two Koreas, in the face of a low number of women diplomats, especially in North Korea. H.E. Labidi suggested that women from civil society in the two countries should join forces and cooperate in projects of common interest in the sphere of women’s rights and in the name of a common cultural past. Mrs. Wattar Kassem said that women should “make their own mindset” and lobby together to transform the society.

Overall, the webinar brought to light insightful stories and lessons learned from women leaders from three continents that sent a message of peace, hope and reconciliation between the two Koreas. As H.E. Labidi said, the cultural shift that is required will not happen quickly or easily. But, she said, the key to sustainable positive change is not aggression or force—as some women have been led to believe—but rather the quality of empathy and long-term investment of women at their best.

This same quality, fostered at home, must be brought to the table. Therefore, trying to masculinize women in leadership does not solve the problem. Instead, she said, a loving (feminine) approach can transform the way countries lead.



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Session IV
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Moderator: H.E. Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Prime Minister (2003), Finland

QYA Moderator: Mrs. Marcia de Abreu SG, WFPW Europe, Spain
Introduction: Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, Coordinator for Europe & Middle East, International Association of First Ladies for Peace

SESSION STARTS IN: 00:00

Speakers:

- Dr. Sun Jin Moon, Senior Vice President, Women's Federation for World Peace International
- H.E. Mme Neziha Labidi, Minister for Women, Family and Children (2016-2020), Tunisia
- H.E. Nayla Moawad, Former First Lady, Minister of Social Affairs (1992-2004), Lebanon
- Mrs. Kholoud Wattar Kassem, Founder & President, Lebanese Women Towards Decision Making NGO, Lebanon

00:00

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