

UPF convenes the virtual International Leadership Conference 2021 - ILC2021

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Asia Pacific -- On the foundation of over 120 webinars it held in the past three months in support of peace in and the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, UPF convened the virtual International Leadership Conference 2021 (ILC2021) in five regions: Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific, Europe and the Middle East and Japan. The theme of the conference was "Toward Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Creating the Foundation for a Unified World." The Asia Pacific regional program took place from April 29 to May 1, 2021. Nearly 20,000 people registered for the program and as many as 250,000 watched it live.

The three-day event started with an Opening Plenary at 10:00 a.m. Bangkok time on April 29. Invocations for peace were offered by four religious leaders of four different faiths: Father Andy Gunardi (Catholicism), H. H. Shree Shree Shree Sadguru Bhau Maharaj ji (Hinduism), Dr. Kazi Nurul Islam (Islam) and Ven. Dr. B. Dhammarathana Thero (Buddhism).



In his keynote address, **Dr. Thomas G. Walsh**, *chairman of UPF International*, stated: "Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the co-founder of the Universal Peace Federation, had called UPF to give undivided focus to this project, to promote inter-Korean cooperation and move to peaceful reunification." He explained how the ILC2021 had been carried out after a series of webinars on Korean reunification took place all over the world. "There is a very strong strategic plan in place for this ILC2021," he said.

Dr. Walsh announced that the 6th Rally of Hope, hosted by UPF, will be held on May 9 in Korea. This is the next rally in a series of rallies that has caught the attention of millions of people worldwide. The upcoming event will focus on the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula and launch "Think Tank 2022," a global network of experts in all sectors and fields that will comprise expert working groups

linked to UPF's eight associations.



Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, *chairman of UPF-Asia Pacific*, discussed the several programs and projects that UPF is carrying out in support of the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. They are: (1) the Alliance for a Unified Korea, an approach to peace through dialogue, scholarly research and civil society initiatives that build personal connections; (2) the Korean Peninsula Webinar Series to raise awareness of the problem and lead to a variety of recommendations; (3) Expert Working Groups, each consisting of leading figures in different fields; (4) Fact-finding Consultations, a series of fact-finding tours that will allow experts to meet with counterparts in both South Korea and North Korea; and (5) the World Summit 2021, following the pattern of World Summit 2020.

Hon. Dhakal also spoke about the proposal made by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to establish an Asia Pacific Union (APU). The APU would usher in a new era of a unified, peaceful Asia Pacific Rim culture and contribute to the reunification of the two Koreas. Lastly, he assured that, "the deliberations and insights gained from these discussions will be a milestone for us for the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula and the world."

Mr. Demian Dunkley, *regional president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU)*, an affiliated organization, in Asia Pacific 1, gave the welcome remarks. He emphasized how truly blessed we are for being a part of the biggest transformational change in human history. He went on to say that "because of incredible sacrifices throughout human history of our ancestors, of the great people that have lived and sacrificed and died and gone before us, [have we been able to get] to this point. We are blessed with the responsibility to bring peace into fulfillment." In order to change the world, change has to start with oneself.

Mr. Dunkley compared it with pruning trees: "We all know why we need to prune a tree. Is the mind of a man and a woman any different? When we prune a tree, we're pruning away precious limbs and branches that we used to need or we're taking away even new little sprouts that look fresh but are actually not needed. But when we prune a tree, somehow in spring time, it explodes with even more bounty." Sending his greetings from South Korea, he shared how flowers were blossoming beautifully there, just as they are in North Korea. The two countries were never supposed to be divided. But, in some sense, this initiative symbolizes a worldwide family that we are bringing together as one.

Rev. Masaichi Hori, *regional president of FFWPU Asia Pacific 2*, also warmly welcomed the participants. "This year is an important milestone leading to the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. At the [most recent] International Leadership Conference, constructive discussions based on universal values were discussed. I am confident that [this ILC] will contribute to the resolution of the last Cold War on earth (i.e., the Korean Peninsula)," he affirmed. Rev. Hori was convinced that this international effort will serve as a model for permanent world peace.

Hon. Leopoldo N. Bataoil, *a former Filipino congressman (2010-2019) and mayor of the municipality of Lingayen, Pangasinan, Philippines*, then gave the congratulatory remarks. He talked about the Korean War, which happened 70 years ago and said it is time for the two Koreas to reunite. "Yes, it will not be easy. There will be numerous ramifications in the social, political and economic spheres. There might be a seemingly endless travail. There will be many challenges. But, I believe that everything will be worth it."