

UPF Korea: Korean Academics Evaluate NGOs' Environmental Activism

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Seoul, South Korea – As the climate crisis has become increasingly severe, national interest in a low-carbon society is rising. To address this, UPF-Korea, in collaboration with the Korean Peace NGO Association, held an academic seminar under the theme “Climate and Environmental Change and NGOs” on July 4, 2024, at UPF headquarters in Seoul.

The event featured presentations and discussions by a distinguished panel of experts, including the vice president of UPF, **Mr. Jung Dong-Won**; president of the Korean Peace NGO Association, **Mr. Wi In-Kyu**; president of Sunhak UP Graduate University, **Mr. Doh Hyun-Seop**; as well as **Prof. Jung Shi-Gu**, **Prof. Kim In-Su**, **Dr. Moon Byung-Chul**, and **Dr. Cha Jun-young**.



In his opening remarks, **Mr. Jung Dong-won** outlined the activities of UPF-Korea, noting that the organization's initiatives are anchored in three global agendas: unification, peace, and the environment. “The environmental issue is a global concern that requires collective action to achieve harmonious coexistence between humanity and the natural world,” he said. He reported that he had conducted a workshop in June, together with Youth and Students for Peace and the Women's Federation for World Peace, aimed at training environmental activists, and that UPF-Korea plans to continue activities in this area.

Prof. Kim In-su emphasized, “The issue of global environmental pollution has emerged as a new challenge that humanity must address on a global scale. In order to address this issue, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon established the Hyejeong International Environment and Peace Foundation, a non-profit public foundation, in 2017 and presented the vision of environmental missionary work.” He said that UPF-Korea will continue to seek righteous individuals in Korean society who share an ideology of peace, and can participate in practical activities focused on the three global agendas.



Dr. Lee Kyung-Hee spoke on “Climate Change and Civil Society.” In her overview, she explained how greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, etc.) emitted in large quantities since the Industrial Revolution have resulted in a rise in the Earth’s atmospheric temperature, leading to climate crises such as sea level rise and heavy rainfall. The tipping point of temperature rise that triggers irreversible climate change on Earth is predicted to be 1.5 degrees Celsius. Therefore countries around the world are striving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. South Korea declared on Oct. 28, 2020, that it would strive for carbon neutrality by 2050, and is participating in efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.



In his presentation, **Dr. Kim Young-Jae** analyzed climate and environmental movements carried out by domestic and international NGOs. He said they are extensive and complex, necessitating a clear focus on practical activities. Currently, many governments and large corporations are focused on ESG – environmental, social and governance – initiatives, to achieve sustainable development. NGOs who are interested in climate and environmental issues and wish to enhance their expertise need to consider focusing their activities on the ‘E,’ he said.