

## UPF USA Forum at the UN: Proposals for Peace in Korea and the Asia-Pacific

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**New York, United States** – At a conference at UN headquarters in New York on May 23, 2024, UPF introduced three key projects to advance peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region. About 100 people, including UN ambassadors, NGO leaders, and representatives of women’s and youth groups, attended the event, with the theme “Peace and Prosperity in the Asia-Pacific Region: Toward Greater Unity and Cooperation.”

**Mrs. Lynn Walsh**, director of the UPF Office of the Family, served as the MC at the luncheon, which was hosted by UPF-USA. In his welcoming remarks **Dr. Michael Jenkins**, president of UPF-USA, explained that UPF has actively supported the United Nations’ four key pillars – peace and security, human rights, rule of law, and development – in all continents of the world. He also introduced UPF’s eight primary associations and their activities.



**Dr. Charles S. Yang**, chairman of UPF-International, gave the keynote speech. He first expressed his appreciation to the United Nations for its support to his country at a time of need. “As a Korean, I always

deeply appreciate the UN, and those nations that sent their finest young men and women to defend South Korea during the Korean War, so that it could emerge as one of the leading democratic nations of the world,” he said. “Without the support of the United Nations, the Republic of Korea would not exist today.”



He went on to suggest that the United Nations could be instrumental in resolving the current state of tension that persists on the Korean Peninsula, by setting up a UN Peace Park in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that separates North and South Korea. He also proposed that this would be a strategic location for a fifth official UN Office.

“The UN currently has four official offices, but none is located in Asia, the most populous region of the world,” he pointed out. “A UN Office based in Korea would provide a strong incentive for cooperation, and eventual unification, on the peninsula. It would also be well positioned to deal with security and development issues in the Asia-Pacific region.”



**Mr. Ek Nath Dhakal**, president of UPF-Asia-Pacific and a member of Parliament in Nepal, then introduced UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon’s proposal to establish an Asia Pacific Union. This would be a broad-based, independent, non-political body that draws together like-minded individuals and organizations, including government bodies, NGOs and civil society groups, from Asia-Pacific nations.

Mr. Dhakal stressed that Asian values – which include an emphasis on family, filial piety and faith as well as an inclination toward cooperation, balance and harmony – can support collective growth and development in the region.

A number of diplomats expressed support for these proposals, and their shared commitment to cooperation for peace and mutual prosperity among Asia-Pacific nations.



**Amb. Tithiarun Mao** of Cambodia voiced his country’s commitment to developing regional cooperation, trust and progress. He also expressed thanks for Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's recognition of Prime Minister Hun Sen with the 2022 Sun Hak Peace Prize Founder’s Award.

**Amb. Rebecca Bryant** of Australia explained the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, adopted by Pacific islands, including her country, to advance regional stability and security. She said that Australia values partnerships and collective action in advancing a shared vision for the region. She emphasized that Australia is a strong ally of the free democratic nations, and stressed the importance of economic development to ensure peace.



**Amb. Mohan Peiris** of Sri Lanka referred to the Buddhist practices of cultivating ethical behavior, mental clarity and compassion, and taking action towards peace and prosperity. He highlighted Sri

Lanka's role in supporting the peace processes of neighboring countries, including Nepal and Myanmar. He shared the historical challenges his country has faced with different communities, but said that through it all, they have achieved unity. He also expressed the hope that the United States would take a more active leadership role in the region.



**Dr. Chameera Yapa Abeywardena**, foreign affairs secretary of the Speakers Bureau of the Sri Lankan Parliament, expressed his appreciation for UPF's work in his country, and introduced his father, the speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, who sent a recorded message. **Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena** said that his country values regional cooperation and collaboration, and looks forward to working with UPF and neighbor countries towards mutual prosperity.



Miss Universe Nepal 2017, **Ms. Nagma Shrestha**, highlighted women's unique role in promoting peace and prosperity. "Our nurturing nature, our resilience, and our ability to empathize make us natural peacemakers," she said. "By embracing our innate qualities and leading by example, we can inspire others to follow suit." Dr. Jenkins invited Ms. Shrestha to play a key role with the UPF-affiliated International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace, which brings together performers and artists who promote positive messaging.