

UPF Asia: 1,500 view the International Media Association for Peace Webinar

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"The World at a Turning Point: The Role of the Media" was the theme for the second International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) webinar (the first event was June 9th from Europe). In addressing this theme, the media turned a critical light on itself. There was general agreement that their social responsibility went beyond just reporting raw facts in an unbiased manner, even though this basic assumption is being challenged in today's polarized press. Panelists noted that news outlets should be viewed as participants and partners in nation-building. One speaker used the term, "a patriotic media."

There were 527 registered participants from 48 nations. This breaks down to a 317 live audience in Zoom and 48 Facebook links. On Facebook there were 1.5k views and 44 shares. A distinguished group of 10 panelists from seven nations was invited. The webinar was broadcast in five languages: English, Thai, Cambodian, Indonesian and Russian. Recognition and gratitude go to Dr. Thomas Walsh, Chair of UPF International, for his insight in helping select this topic. The event was held on Tuesday, June 23, 2020.

Mr. Thomas P. McDevitt is Chairman of The Washington Times. This was his first public speaking platform as the acting Global Coordinator for IMAP after its launching in Korea during the World Summit 2020 in February. He emphasized that the media needs to look for hidden trends in current history. Working with Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for 47 years showed him that their insights, guidance and scholarship on the nature of our time is singularly profound.

The turning point that Mr. McDevitt focused on was Mother Moon's address at the prestigious Kennedy Caucus Room, in the United States Senate on Nov. 30, 2016. He said this was a primary thesis statement in nearly every speech she has given and quoted her saying, "We look at this world and see unspeakable, inarticulate misery happening all around the globe. This is impossible to solve with mere human power. What should we do from here on forward? We should start a movement that once again attends God as the original owner of the universe in our families, countries, and world."

In his summary remarks at the end of the 90-minute program, Mr. McDevitt stepped away from the camera and mic to grab a copy of the book, Mother of Peace, which he displayed promptly. He encouraged the audience to get a copy as it is being sold on Amazon, highlighting that Mother Moon's story as a child escaping North Korea, growing up as a refugee in a war-torn land, standing besides her husband of 52 years as they built a worldwide foundation, and then successfully taking the reins of this global movement after his passing, is profound and inspiring.

Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, Chairman of UPF in the Asia Pacific region gave Opening Remarks and presented an overall background of UPF and IMAP saying the role of the media was critical in forming healthy public opinions. He explained further saying, "What is needed today is a responsible and accountable media." Then asked, "How can we protect our society from misinformation, stigma and fake news?"

Dr. Chung-sik Yong, the UPF Regional Group Chair for the Asia Pacific, said that Father and Mother Moon have taught that our universal values come from the family because it is our most important and fundamental institution. Then he added, "Since family-building is nation-building... One of the most

important roles of a patriotic media is to help protect and promote the integrity of the family."

H.E. Ek Tha, is the Spokesman of the Council of Ministers, Advisor to the Ministry of Information and Standing Vice-Chairman of the Royal Government of Cambodia. He spoke about the importance of being trained in order to be an effective media spokesperson and listed 10 criteria for the job. He mentioned that his country hosted the 16th Asia Media Summit last year. UPF Cambodia worked closely together with H.E. Ek Tha and his team during the Asia Pacific Summit. Our meeting, though virtual, was immediately warm and friendly.

Mr. John Ruddick is a media commentator for Sydney Morning Herald, the Spectator and Sky News TV. He lives in Sydney, Australia. In 2018, he wrote a book entitled, "Make the Liberal Party Great Again." He said journalists should be like judges -- impartial. He observed with passion and solid facts the on-going destructive polarization in the media and particularly in the United States during this election year. He hopes that UPF and IMAP could bring us together and provide the much-needed foresight for this to happen.

Mr. Devsagar Singh is Executive Editor of newsabode.com in New Delhi, India with vast experience in both international and Indian media. He emphasized the importance of the media being truthful, yet not creating fear. Ultimately, he said, the impact of the media needs to be appropriate and positive. The media has a social responsibility, i.e., not to be too morbid in reporting about fatalities during the coronavirus.

Mr. Barbie Atienza spoke next. He is Head of External Affairs, Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation and President of United Print Media Group (UPMG) Philippines, an association of major newspapers -- broadsheets and tabloids, magazines and books. He said that the media needed to be objective, accurate and reliable while working with people and the government. The outcome of a responsible media is to: inform, inspire and empower.

Mr. Subash Ghimire graduated from Harvard University in 2014 and is the Editor-in-Chief for the Republica English daily in Nepal for the past six years. He stood in on behalf of Mr. Binod Gyawali, who was not able to join the webinar because of the sudden passing of his brother in law. Condolences went to Mr. Gyawali's family. Mr. Ghimire explained that the media is changing rapidly and this is being accelerated due to the current crisis. He appreciated collaborating with other media personalities, finding it very useful.

Mrs. Merly Christina Barlaan is the International Vice-President for Asia, Women's Federation for World Peace International, she is a producer and co-host of Women's World, a weekly webinar for women. She facilitated the question-and-answer session for nearly 30 minutes.

At the conclusion of the webinar the panelists and audience were invited to two up-coming events:

The International Summit Council for Peace – Asia Pacific on Monday, June 29th.

The Rally of Hope, on Sunday, July 19th, a digital mega event with a global audience of up to 1 million, featuring Mother Moon and VVIP dignitaries from all regions of the world.