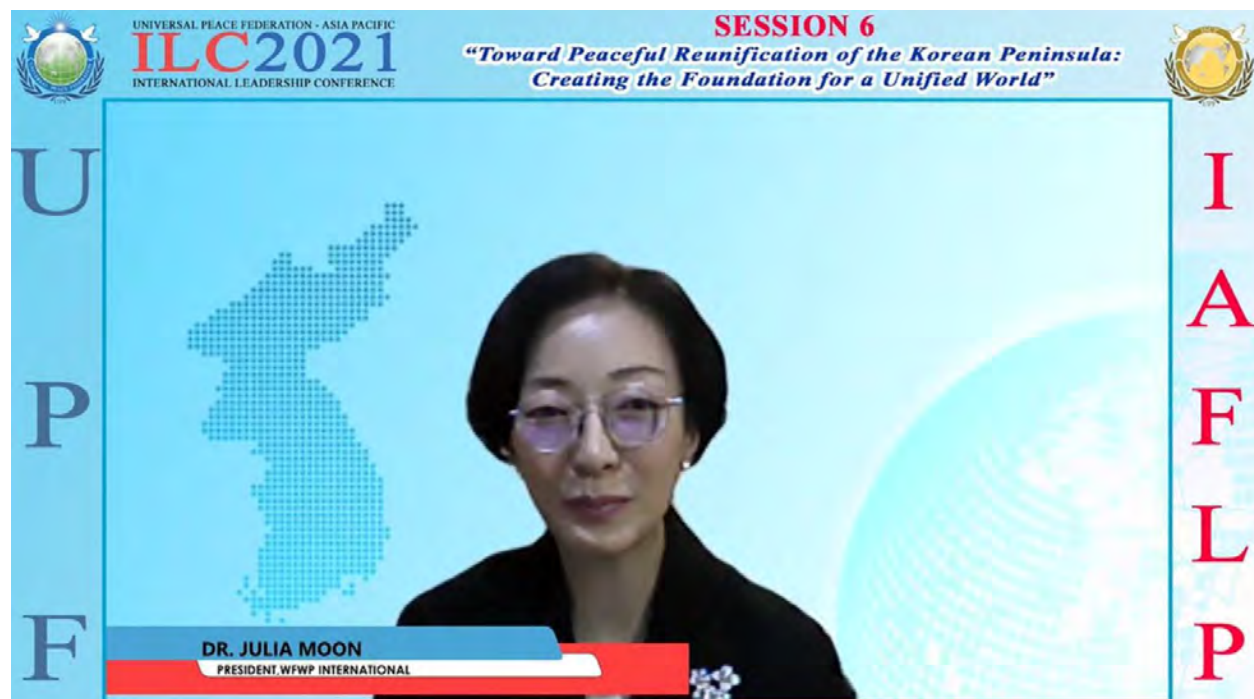


First Ladies and Women Leaders Perspective on Peace in the Pacific Rim

Ursula McLackland
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Asia Pacific - Four former first ladies (Fiji, Kiribati, Nepal, Sri Lanka), two experts in the Korean Peninsula's peace process and other women leaders addressed the theme, "First Ladies and Women Leaders Perspective on Peace in the Pacific Rim: A Collaboration of Asia Pacific Region and South Korea," during Session Six of the International Leadership Conference 2021 (ILC2021) - Asia Pacific program, which was held on April 30, 2021 and hosted by the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP).



A total of 2,083 people registered for the event and 390 people from 43 nations attended it by Zoom. Moreover, Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, chairman of UPF-Asia Pacific, also garnered an estimated 10,700 viewers through Facebook Live.

Dr. Julia Moon, president of WFWP International, opened the session with inspiration from UPF founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. Dr. Moon talked about the importance of peacemaking in the Asia Pacific Rim. She elaborated, saying, "Our world needs peacemakers, and women are naturally suited for this effort because of their God-given feminine and nurturing qualities." Dr. Moon also highlighted the importance and purpose of IAFLP as a platform for addressing critical issues of our time.

Hon. Hisila Yami Bhattarai, first lady of Nepal (2011-2013) and a member of the Constituent Assembly

of Nepal, recalled the Nepalese Civil War and talked about the importance of both individual and community freedom with the goal of looking forward to inclusive development. She also spoke about women's concern for sustainability since women carry the wombs that bring future generations into this world.

Madame Adi Koila Mara Nailatikau, first lady of Fiji (2009-2015), stressed that in the peace process, knowledge of and understanding the conflict are more important than guns and weapons. The first lady also pointed out that religion is important in peace-making and commended Rev. and Mrs. Moon for planting the seed for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.



Madame Bernadette Meme Tong, first lady of Kiribati (2003-2015), highlighted the importance of the Pacific Rim in peace-building in the world. She stated that once we accept that peace is more than just the absence of war and conflict, we are faced with the reality of the amount of work that needs to be done to attain peace. "Such a vision is only realized when we start building peace in our own homes and communities," she emphasized. Madame Meme Tong also invited the audience to join Kiribati in the fight against climate change, which poses a great challenge to humanity.

Madame Shiranthi Wikkaramasinghe Rajapaksa, first lady of Sri Lanka (2005-2015), commended UPF's founder by saying that "This noble step has shown that Mother Moon has recognized the unique role of women in all walks of life and provided a forum to discuss various issues from a women's way of thinking." In her remarks, the first lady expressed that in pursuit of sustainable development, it is important to put women and girls at the center of economic development.

Prof. Mi Kyung Lee of the National Institute of Unification Education discussed the what, why, and how of peace on the Korean Peninsula. She elaborated that pursuing peace in Korea is the starting point for overcoming division and peaceful unification in the region and world. Prof. Lee also stated that the goal of the reunification process is to realize lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula through peaceful coexistence with neighboring countries as well as the establishment of peace between the two Koreas.

Prof. Hyeon-son Park, chairwoman of the National Council for Cooperation and Reconciliation, highlighted the role of North Korean women in the peace process, especially in the aspects of politics, the economy and family. She concluded by saying that there is a "necessity to seek exchanges and solidarity between North and South Korean women based on understanding and sympathy for North Korean women." She pointed out the importance of discussing the "individualized change of consciousness of North Korean women in the theme of patriarchy and peace issues."

The session was moderated by Mrs. Margie Moon, regional chair of IAFLP-Korea, and concluded with remarks from IAFLP's international coordinator, Mrs. Blessie Dhakal, who gave a brief summary of each speaker's points.