

UPF Asia-Pacific ILC 2021 (part 1): Session I: Opening Plenary

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Asia Pacific -- The Opening Plenary of the second International Leadership Conference 2021 (ILC2021) -- Asia Pacific program was held at 9 a.m. Bangkok time on July 7. The focus of the session was "Towards the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Peace and Security." Among the six prominent leaders who presented was a former prime minister and former speaker of the House.

A total of 1,120 people from 38 nations registered for the event and 541 watched it live on Zoom and hundreds more on YouTube and Facebook Live.

The program began with invocations offered by the leaders of five faiths: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Taoist, and was followed by welcome remarks given by **Rev. Demian Dunkley**, *regional president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an affiliated organization, in Asia Pacific I.*

Dr. Thomas Walsh, *chairman of UPF International*, said that UPF will focus its efforts on bringing peace to the Korean Peninsula throughout this year and will hold two more ILCs between July and August: one in late July, which will focus on track II diplomacy, and another at the end of August.

In his remarks, **Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe**, *former prime minister of Sri Lanka (2015-2019)*, appreciated UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for her commitment to and advancement of universal peace. He expressed that it is essential for Asia that the two Koreas unite, which has to be done peacefully, and added that a "united Korea means a stronger Asia."

Hon. Jose De Venecia Jr., *5-time speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines*, in his speech, discussed a few proposals of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), an initiative of UPF, for supporting Korean reunification and peace in Northeast Asia. These include (i) the two Koreas adapt to global changes; (ii) the revival of the six-party talks on Korean unification; (iii) expanding the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three to become ASEAN Plus Four by adding North Korea to the East Asian economic grouping; and (iv) transferring the International Conference of Asian Parties (ICAPP) Secretariat from Manila, Philippines to Seoul, South Korea.

The speeches were followed by remarks from two commentators. **Hon. Ajay Dutt**, *a member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly and chair of IAPP-Delhi in India*, expressed his concern that the tension between North and South Korea and the manufacturing of nuclear weapons by North Korea are serious threats to global peace and security. The second commentator, **Prof. Dr. GP Doraisamy Govindasamy**, *secretary general of the World Humanitarian Drive (WHD), Malaysia*, encouraged the audience and underscored the need for consistency in addressing and to exert pressure to resolve peace and security issues in order to convey to the world that peace can be achieved.

Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, *regional chair of UPF-Asia Pacific*, served as the moderator.