

UPF Melbourne, Australia Convenes The Online Mutual Prosperity Summit

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Australia - The online Mutual Prosperity Summit, part of the Values Summit series of UPF-Australia, was convened on March 18, 2023 to address the best way to achieve mutual prosperity, which is one of the greatest moral and economic challenges of our time. With current economic models having not always produced the best outcomes with respect to creating wealth and addressing poverty and environmental sustainability, the event focused on the theme, "Rethinking Our Economic Models." Forty participants in the fields of education, academia and community work took part in the summit.

The event was organized by UPF-Australia, the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAPP)-Oceania and the International Association for Peace and Economic Development (IAPD)-North America. Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP)-Australia, an affiliated organization, was a strategic partner.

The moderator was Dr. Jennifer Huang, a finance lecturer at RMIT University in Australia, regular speaker on financial literacy for Generation Z and mentor for young women professionals. Previously, she was the CEO of the Financial Planning Institute of the Shanghai Finance University. She has made it her mission to empower others through financial education.

The first speaker, Mr. Alan Jessen, coordinator of IAPD-North America, spoke about UPF co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon's vision for economic democracy. For over 100 years, visionary thinkers and economists have called for economic democracy as an antidote to the increasing concentration of capital ownership and wealth that jeopardizes a moral and free society.

He said, "The principle of interdependence, which arises out of a deeper philosophical basis, which we call Unification Thought, can provide a theoretical basis for the presenting of a fresh discourse on modern economic theory and economic systems." He argued that the dynamic between public and private ownership has not been sorted satisfactorily. The growth of economic structures such as cooperatives, mutual companies, stock ownership companies, various forms of public and private partnerships play an important role in fostering mutual prosperity, he also stated.

The second speaker was economic change advocate Dr. Katherine Trebeck, who serves as a strategic advisor to The Next Economy and Centre for Policy Development, a leading policy institute in Australia, and is a writer-in-residence at the University of Edinburgh. She is also the co-founder of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll) and WEAll Scotland and initiated the Wellbeing Economy Governments

partnership.

Dr. Trebeck maintained that a major reset in how economies are approached, designed and delivered is needed in an era where the world is facing simultaneous and overlapping crises. She raised this question: What does taking this seriously entail and what are some of the contours of an economy that more directly meets the needs of people and planet mean in practice?

She argued that a rethink is needed on using economic growth as the predominant measure of wellbeing and said, "There's this assumption that having more is a way to boost individual wellbeing, no matter the quality or use of that stuff; that's something that's deeply seated in our gross domestic product mindset." She also maintained that there is a problem with seeing the environment as an input to production and consumption systems without regard to the consequences.

The final speaker was Ms. Hana Kolar, a student at Monash University in Australia who is studying law and science, majoring in ecology and conservation biology. She is also an exchange student in international law and comparative law at Sciences Po in Paris, France.

Ms. Kolar spoke on the topic, "Access to Education and Its Impacts on Social and Economic Justice." With today's generation interconnected in a way never previously imagined, the need for access to education is more vital now than ever before, she said. Yet, the number of children not getting access to this necessary development tool remains concerningly high. What is alarming is the education statistics in less developed parts of the world, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where 63% of students complete their primary school education and only 38% complete their high school education. When people have the ability to access the necessary education they are more equipped to have better knowledge and tools that are required to participate in the social and economic systems.

Ms. Kolar concluded with a quote from the Dalai Lama, saying: "Everything is interconnected. My interest is linked to everyone else's. Our survival and future are linked. Therefore, the destruction of your so-called enemy is actually the destruction of yourself." Therefore, if you truly wish to change the world, look to help everyone around you, not just those who you consider a friend.

The supporting organizations of the event were the Center for Global Nonkilling, Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Global Opportunities Commercialisation, Global Somali Diaspora and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - Asia Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (APNIEVE).