

First Asian Summit Draws 400 Leaders

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UPF Leadership and Good Governance Award conferred to Former Prime Minister Madhav K. Nepal

Manila, Philippines - Four hundred participants from 28 nations took part in the first ever Asian Summit organized by UPF.

The summit, titled “Toward Peace, Security and Human Development in the Asia Pacific Region,” was held in the Manila Hotel in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, 2015.

Dignitaries came from many Asian nations and from other regions of the world. Philippine dignitaries included His Excellency Joseph Ejercito Estrada, the former president of the Philippines, who is currently the Manila City mayor.

Other dignitaries were former Prime Minister of Nepal, His Excellency Madhav K. Nepal; former Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal, Honorable Sujata Koirala; five-time Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives, Honorable Jose C. De Venecia Jr., and many other distinguished leaders in the fields of politics, diplomacy, religion, academia, business, government and civil society.

The 400 participants included 121 foreign delegates, including those from UPF International. Twelve embassies and consulates were represented. Notable was also the presence of 27 agencies and organizations from the print media, TV and radio, including Korean media.

The Opening Plenary with Dr. Thomas Walsh, president of UPF International, as the emcee, started with an interfaith prayer from representative religious leaders and was followed by the Opening Message from Dr. Chung Sik Yong, regional chair of UPF-Asia. His Excellency Madhav K. Nepal gave the Keynote Address and was also conferred the prestigious Leadership and Good Governance Award by UPF. His Excellency Nepal said, “My appreciation justly goes to the Universal Peace Federation that has organized this summit for the efforts it has relentlessly made for the promotion of world peace, understanding and tolerance among human beings through interfaith dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations of Asia.”

The Chairman’s Address was given by Dr. Chang Shik Yang, international chair of UPF. Manila Mayor Joseph Ejercito Estrada delivered a special message, amusing the audience when he said, “Although I am an ‘ex-convict,’ I believe I am in the very good company of many other ‘ex-convicts’ like Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, among others.” He further said, “Also Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of UPF, was imprisoned because of his conviction to stand up for his beliefs, by going against tyranny in his homeland and because of following God’s will.”

His Excellency Estrada and His Excellency Madhav Nepal both lauded the Universal Peace Federation and its founders, Dr. and Mrs. Moon, during interviews conducted by the Korean media after the Opening Plenary.



Speakers in the next session, entitled “Building a Roadmap to Sustainable Peace in the Asia Pacific Region,” were Hon. Sujata Koirala, former deputy prime minister of Nepal; Hon. Jose De Venecia Jr., five-time speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives; and Professor Thomas Hwang, UPF special advisor to the Middle East. Dr. Robert Kittel, the Education Director of UPF-Asia, served as the moderator for the session.

The afternoon session, entitled “The Impact of Interfaith Cooperation and Harmony toward Peace in Asia and the World,” was held in celebration of the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week. This session had Rev. Tanya Edwards, an American Christian minister, as moderator, and the speakers were Dr. Thomas Walsh, president of UPF International; Father Eliseo Mercado representing Christianity; Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar representing Hinduism; Hon. Sultan Pax Mangudadatu, representing Islam; and Mr. Sok Setha, representing Buddhism. The session concluded with a heartwarming ceremony of interfaith brotherhood and sisterhood between religious leaders. The “brothers and sisters” hugged each other onstage to the applause and appreciation of all.

The last session in the afternoon was entitled “Peace and Development: The Role of Media and Education.” It was moderated by Dr. Felicitas Sicam from the Professors World Peace Academy, Philippines. The presenters for the session were Dr. Robert Kittel of UPF-Asia, Dr. Reuben Alagaran III from Miriam College in the Philippines, and Mrs. Shova Gyawali, director of Nepal Republic Media.

In the evening there was a gala dinner in order to honor and remember the life and legacy of the founders of UPF and celebrate the anniversary of their birth. Another highlight of the evening was the first-ever PEACE Awards for the media in the Philippines.

On the concluding day of the Asian Summit, February 1, 2015, the first session, “The Founders’ Legacy: World Peace through True Love,” saw Rev. Kevin Thompson of the Family Federation for World Peace-U.S.A. as the moderator and Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, president of UPF International, and Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, former minister and current member of the Parliament in Nepal, as speakers. The next session was entitled “Strengthening of Families, Rebuilding the Nations, Creating a World of Peace,” which highlighted the lifelong mission of Dr. and Mrs. Moon to realize an ideal world based on ideal families. Bishop Joy Theriot, president of the Filipino International Community Association in the U.S.A., was the moderator and the speakers were Bishop Reynaldo Cristobal from the Philippines and Mrs. Ursula McLackland, UPF-Asia secretary general. The session concluded with a marriage rededication ceremony.

Before the participants joined the Interfaith Peace Blessing Ceremony in Marikina City that afternoon, the summit concluded with a Closing Luncheon, at which Dr. Lek Thaveetermsakul, vice chair of UPF-Asia, served as the master of ceremonies. Representatives from the audience were called to share their responses. Several delegates were also awarded Ambassador for Peace certificates in the closing program.

There were many hugs and smiles even long after the program had ended. One of the delegates said, “Now I could catch the vision of UPF and its founders. I need to work on the local level to reach out to other religious organizations in my area, when I go back, instead of just thinking of my own congregation and not thinking of working together with others.”



Founders' Birth Anniversary Memorial Banquet and PEACE Awards

The gala dinner of the Asian Summit commemorated the joint birthday of the UPF founders, Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, and celebrated their life and legacy for the world. A video was shown about the 30th anniversary of The Washington Times which exemplified the founders' recognition of the media as powerful agents of change, especially in the pursuit of peace. Dr. Chung Sik Yong, regional chair of UPF-Asia, gave the Welcome Remarks, testifying about the founders' initiatives in the field of media. He then urged the media people and awardees present to make a genuine commitment to bring about a world of true and lasting peace and happiness for all.

Because Philippine Congresswoman Gina De Venecia was ill, her message was read by her daughter, Ms. Carissa Cruz-Evangelista. Mrs. De Venecia testified how the founders, whom she called “Papa Moon and Mama Moon,” saved her from depression and grief after she lost her youngest daughter in an unfortunate accident. She said, “Dr. Moon’s teachings have had a transformative impact on me and on millions of people in various parts of the world. Almost three years after his death, we still see his ideologies as galvanizing elements in restoring the faith and the hopes that have been lost in the midst of cynicism. That’s why tonight, those of us who still struggle with the void he left behind still find the resolve to move on by gathering together, not only to celebrate his life, but also to carry on his enduring legacy of faith in ‘One Family under God.’”

The PEACE Awards ceremony followed after dinner. There was excitement in the audience as the awards ceremony started.

The PEACE Awards is a pilot project spearheaded by UPF in the Philippines together with Asian Peace and Unity Corps (APUC) and the Integrity Circles Movement. The concept of the PEACE (People’s Empowerment for the Advancement of Communities and Environment) Awards is to give recognition to media practitioners who have made exemplary contributions for the advancement of peace, community development and environmental protection. The awards focus especially on unheralded media personalities and organizations. There were 16 winners in the four categories of media, namely, print, TV,

radio and social media. Then two recipients received special awards: the Integrity in Action Award and the Patriot of the Nation Award. The PEACE Awards were conceptualized by Mr. Dan Villa, the former convener of the Advertisement Congress in the Philippines, who is actively supporting UPF-Philippines.



Twenty-seven media agencies were represented at the summit.

It was a successful program fully backed by media people. The delegates of the Asian Summit took part in the awards night with Dr. Chang Shik Yang, Dr. Thomas Walsh, Dr. Chung Sik Yong and Rev. Julius Malicdem conferring the trophies to the winners. The evening program concluded with the recitation of the Pledge of Commitment of all present for advancing the cause for true and lasting peace followed by three cheers.

The PEACE Awards opened a way to build stronger relationships with several media groups that can help in the advancement of the founders' vision and have an influence on the society.

