

Parliamentarians at the International Leadership Conference

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Seoul, Korea—A special International Leadership Conference (ILC) convened from Feb. 12 to 16, 2016, in Seoul, Korea, to discuss the theme “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations” and to celebrate the birthdays of UPF Founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

More than 350 international delegates from over 60 nations, including more than 150 current parliamentarians, 13 government ministers, and other leading figures in religion, academia, civil society and government, attended the conference at the Lotte Hotel World in Seoul’s Jamsil neighborhood. The event was co-sponsored by UPF, The Washington Times Foundation and the Segye Ilbo newspaper. Some of the sessions were attended by another 300 participants from the Korea Religions Association and FFWPU World HQ.

A select group of delegates from around the world attended, including government leaders, media, religious leaders, women leaders and civil society leaders. In addition to the ILC program, the delegates participated in three main events: 1) a celebration of the birthdays of the UPF founders; 2) the founding of the International Parliamentarians Peace Association at the National Assembly, the seat of the Korean government; and 3) the Peace Road 2016 Launching in support of the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea. The event was held in Imjingak, a memorial park located in Paju, three miles from Panmunjeom on the 38th parallel.

Opening Banquet (Feb. 12)



At the opening banquet, moderator Richard de Sena, Secretary General of UPF North America, welcomed the guests and invited Chief Priest Nichiko Yoshida of Japan to offer a Buddhist prayer for peace.

Rev. Kyeong-suk Lu, the president of FFWPU Korea, greeted the participants “on behalf of the founders and members of the FFWPU.” He said, “Korea is called the Land of the Morning Calm, but recently Korea is anything but calm,” referencing Pyongyang’s recent rocket launch and underground nuclear test.

In retaliation, South Korea suspended operations at an industrial complex located a few kilometers north of the border run in cooperation with the North. Reverend Ryu said that “it is the heartfelt desire of Father and Mother Moon to unify the peninsula.” He praised Mother Moon, who “carries the movement and has been a guiding light to our friends and members throughout the world.”

Dr. Thomas Walsh, the president of UPF International, expressed appreciation to the co-sponsors of the ILC: The Washington Times Foundation and the Segye Times. Their representatives—Larry Beasley and Dr. Min Ha Kim, respectively—were seated at the head table.

Dr. Walsh spoke about recent UPF activities and particularly the successful partnering with such groups as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Organizations for Development (FBO), the United Religions Initiative (URI), and the Parliament of the World's Religions. Dr. Walsh explained that “we are on the side of how to use soft power solutions to raise awareness, and to move hearts and minds to change the world.”

Opening remarks were given by Hon. Chhaya Sharma Pant, member of Parliament, Nepal. She expressed her heartfelt gratitude to Mother Moon for “her farsightedness to bring together so many men and women of great wisdom. UPF is building a world network of sustainable peace.” She acknowledged UPF-Nepal Director and MP Ek Nath Dhakal, minister of Peace and Reconstruction, who brought 16 MPs from Nepal. “Climate change is the greatest humanitarian crisis of our times” she said.

Hon. Dr. Agustin Jarquín, former congressman and current president of UPF-Nicaragua, quoted Pope Francis, who declared: “Many think differently, feel differently, seek God and find God in different ways. In this crowd, in this range of religions, there is only one certainty we have for all: We are all children of God.” Comparing Pope Francis with True Parents, he quoted Father Moon who said, “The sincere dialogue between men and women of different religions will return results for peace and justice.” He quoted UPF Co-Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who “prophetically emphasized” that “[we should] always be aware that our life on earth is temporary” and “we [should be] measured not by our wealth or power but by our capacity for true love and as we live our life on earth in the service of God and humanity.”

Hon. David Clarke, member of Parliament, Australia, complimented the people of Korea as “hardworking, family-loving, honest to God,” and gave tribute to UPF and its founders. “Over the years the Universal Peace Federation [and its many affiliates] have worked for peace, for the family, for the betterment of mankind. And they have spent billions of dollars to do so, and I do not exaggerate when I say that!” He noted that delegates from 62 countries were present, in which case, “70 to 75 percent of the world’s population are represented here.”

Founders’ Birthday Celebration (Feb. 13)



The participants traveled to Chung Pyung, about one hour east of Seoul, and joined thousands for a celebration of the Founders’ Birthday in the Cheongshim Peace World Center, followed by a luncheon with Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon at the nearby Cheon Jeong Gung Peace Palace.

Dr. Sun Jin Moon, the keynote speaker at the Cheongshim Peace World Center, praised her parents on her mother’s 73rd birthday and what would have been her father’s 96th birthday. She tearfully read excerpts from Chapter One of the founder’s autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving, Global Citizen, “What I Learned about Peace While Being Carried on My Father’s Back.”*

There were video birthday greetings from Kiribati President Anote Tong, U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah and Goodluck Jonathan, former president of Nigeria. The emcee announced that more than 300 leaders from around the world had sent birthday wishes.

Five-time Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines Jose de Venecia Jr. gave the congratulatory message. He immediately touched Mother Moon's heart when he said, "Madame Moon, I see the chair next to you is empty, but we feel Father Moon's presence and that he is enjoying this day very much. Be assured that his dream lives on."

At the congratulatory luncheon, Hon. and Mrs. Ek Nath Dakhal, Nepal's minister of Peace and Reconstruction, presented flower bouquets. The invocation (Report to Heaven) was given by Archbishop George Augustus Stallings Jr., co-chair of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC). A new video about the life and work of the founders, "The Saints Who Loved Humanity," was shown.

Two of the ILC participants offered a few words of congratulations and expressed their thoughts on the significance of UPF's work. Lord Nazir Ahmed, member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom, congratulated Dr. Moon. He recalled his experience with the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) in Gaza and the West Bank. "The interreligious effort brings reconciliation between Christians and Muslims and Sunni and Shia," he said.

Hon. Dan Burton, who represented his district in Indiana for 30 years in the U.S. Congress, said, "I have the honor to give you birthday greetings from America." He read a letter from the 43rd U.S. President George W. Bush and his wife, who wrote, "Dear Mrs. Moon, Happy Birthday! Laura and I hope you enjoy a delightful day. ... For so many years you shared your birthday with your dear late husband, Reverend Moon. We remember him fondly. May this coming year be filled with joy and blessings." Other congressional letters came from Sen. Cory Booker (New Jersey), Sen. Robert Menendez (New Jersey), Rep. Charles Rangel (New York), Rep. Matt Salmon (Arizona), Rep. Joe Wilson (South Carolina) and Rep. Danny K. Davis (Illinois).

Mother Moon addressed the participants. With a loving heart she expressed her gratitude and joy at the outpouring of the presentations and congratulatory messages from around the world.

The Founders' Vision: Principles and Practices for a World of Lasting Peace

After the inspiring birthday celebration and luncheon, the participants returned to the Lotte Hotel World. The first presentation was on "The Founders' Vision: Principles and Practices for a World of Lasting Peace." In this session, presenters long associated with the life and work of the founders, shared about their many experiences living and practicing the teachings and principles that guide the worldwide movement.

Mr. Adama Doumbia, secretary general of UPF West Africa, served as moderator. The speakers were Dr. Robert Kittel, director of education, UPF Asia; Mr. Richard de Sena, secretary general, UPF North America; Mrs. Ursula McLackland, secretary general, UPF Asia; Mr. Tageldin Hamad, secretary general, UPF; and Dr. Masahisa Hayashi, professor emeritus, Waseda University, Japan.

Session I: Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Climate Change (Feb. 14)



The more than 350 international delegates from over 60 nations were joined for the opening plenary with the international chair by another 300 participants from the Korea Religions Association and FFWPU World HQ.

The conference opened with Dr. Thomas Walsh, the international president of UPF, reading a letter of congratulations from Nepalese Prime Minister H.E. K.P. Oli. This was followed by a video message from President Anote Tong of the Republic of Kiribati in the South Pacific, who said he would “work to ensure that what the world promised is delivered,” referencing the serious situation of rising sea levels that climate change has brought to many island nations and the assistance that the U.S. and many developed nations have pledged to provide.

Ambassador Jai-chul Choi, ambassador for climate change, Korea, spoke about the history-making climate accord signed by 195 countries on Dec. 12, 2015 in Paris agreeing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The pact requires that nearly every country, large and small, developed or developing, take action. The ambassador said: “Climate change is the most urgent issue of the 21st century. . . . We have no time to lose.” He thanked the nation of Korea as the host secretariat to the Green Climate Fund, which helps developing nations finance efforts against global warming.

Professor Saburo Takizawa from Toyo Eiwa University in Japan highlighted the unprecedented refugee crisis being faced, particularly in Europe, as a result of international conflicts in the Middle East. But Professor Takizawa also noted there are “climate or environmental refugees” coming from regions suffering from global warming, food insecurity and the scarcity of water.

The third speaker was Mr. Akhtar Ali, mayor of the Nasinu Town Council of Fiji. He noted that rising levels in the oceans are not just a political issue; they are a matter of life and death. “Climate change has created a war zone for the Pacific island nations,” he observed. With some islands just one or two meters above sea level, even a small rise in sea levels can threaten their culture, their customs and even their existence. The mayor called on the international community to protect the people who do not have the resources to deal with this critical problem. “Sound leadership and good governance based on universal values are the way to mitigate this critical issue,” the mayor said.

Hon. Maria Lopardo, congresswoman of the National Congress of Argentina, began by praising UPF’s emphasis on the family, saying that global peace must be preceded by peace in the family and community. Then, as a lawmaker addressing renewable energy in the capital, Buenos Aires, she said a policy of free bicycles had been created. At the end of her address she quoted Pope Francis, saying, “Economics may be a goal, but only to the extent it leads to a sustainable impact.”

The Keynote Address, given by Dr. Sun Jin Moon, the chair of UPF International, expressed her appreciation to everyone who attended the program in honor of her parents’ birthdays. Dr. Moon wove together the spiritual and theological dimensions of the lives of the founders, who are guided by spiritual principles and universal values. She explained that “for my parents, a love of creation is an essential component of their spiritual, moral and theological vision. We cannot imagine achieving peace without having a loving respect for the world around us, our environment.

In fact, according to the world’s religions, human beings are created with a responsibility to take care of the earth, to be good stewards of the earth, and to view the earth, including all natural things and all living things, as expressions of God.”

Dr. Moon concluded the session and introduced the need for spirituality in addressing these global issues. She said that the engine that will give us the “willpower” to attain these goals does not come from government policy alone. “We [need to] draw on the great spiritual and moral traditions for inspiration, guidance and direction at this time,” she said. “Spiritual inspiration . . . has most often been able to guide humanity to go beyond self-interest and to avoid what is called the ‘free rider’ problem.”

Session II: Overcoming Extremism and Promoting the Peaceful Resolution of Conflict: The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations (Feb. 14)

Moderator Mr. Tageldin Hamad, secretary general of UPF, welcomed the participants and introduced the speakers.

Hon. Dr. Viktor Ielenskyi, deputy head of the Committee on Culture and Spirituality, Parliament of Ukraine, spoke about the situation of persecuted Christians when Russia occupied territories belonging to Ukraine. “Catholics and Muslims, Protestants and Ukrainian Orthodox in illegally annexed Crimea and occupied territories of Donbas [Donets Basin] experienced persistent abduction, forced disappearance, violence, torture and extrajudicial killings.”

Congressman Ielenskyi said, “Terrorists and extremists do not respect resolutions of international forums, conferences, statements and petitions.” Despite the many challenges, he believes in peace on earth and the Bible prophecy “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”



Lord Nazir Ahmed, member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom, said that people connect extremism with Islam. Lord Ahmed explained about his faith and stated that a terrorist cannot be a true Muslim. “The Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him) said ‘the middle way is the right way.’ What is needed is interfaith work at the local and national level.” Lord Ahmed emphasized the need for an interfaith council at the United Nations.

Zouheir Bahloul, member of the Knesset, Israel, is an Israeli Arab. He said he feels like an “injured man,” because he is separated from his people in Palestine. “I want to be a good civilian, but I must follow rules that belong to the Palestinian people, but to be a good civilian I must also follow Israeli rules.”

Dr. Emmanuel Dupuy, president of the Institute for European Perspective and Security, France, recalled the victims of the 2015 terror attacks in France, including the office of the magazine Charlie Hebdo in January, and the ISIS Paris attacks which killed 90 persons in November. Dr. Dupuy said, “UPF is playing an important role in moral disarmament. ... Track two diplomacy is important,” he said, “Terrorists are trying to create division in the international order. The main objective of terrorists is to divide us.”

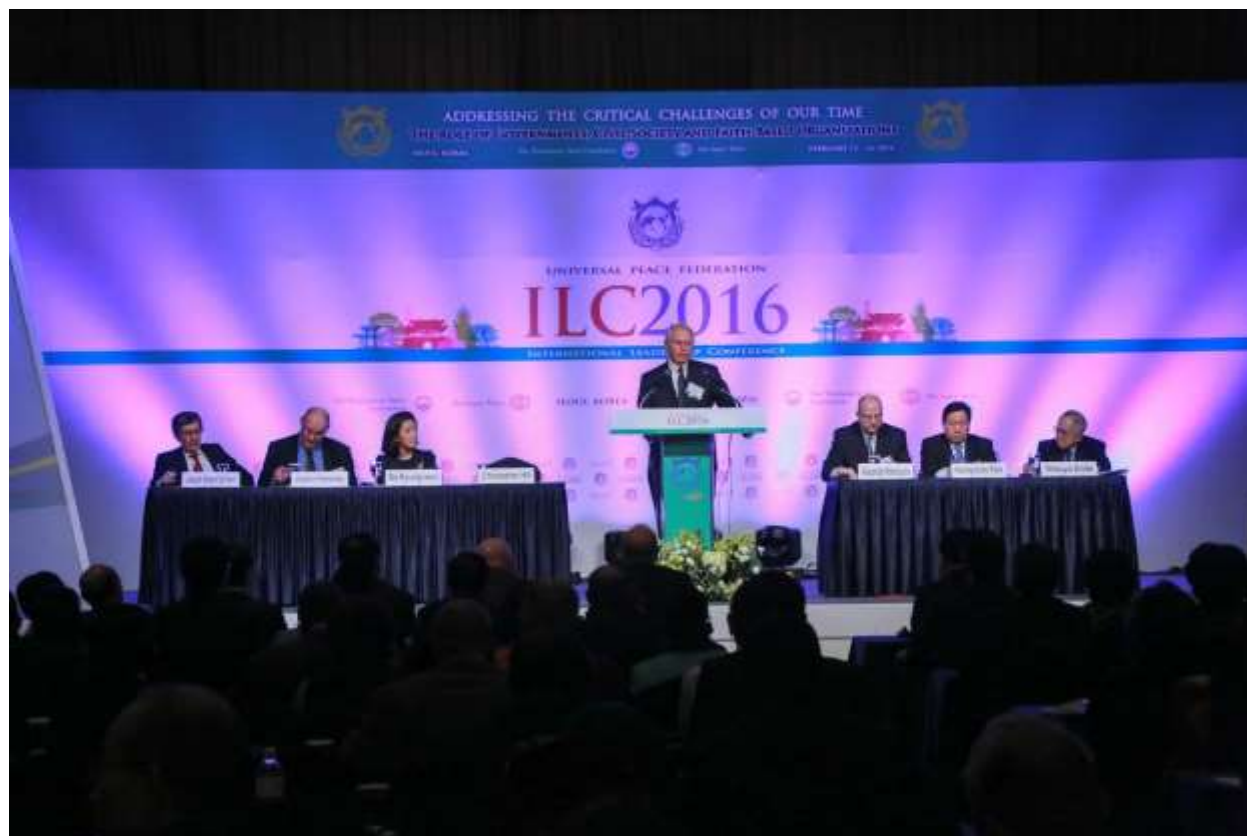
There was a consensus among the panelists that religious faith and institutions can be positive factors in peacebuilding. Religious or spiritual structures and institutions are often most effective at reconstruction and reconciliation when they are not linked to government efforts, because they are able to maintain their independence and the trust of their communities.

Session III: Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Peace and Stability in Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula (Feb. 14)

It is widely recognized that the world has changed dramatically since the post-World War II era when the geopolitical world was dominated by “Atlantic” interests. We are increasingly moving toward a “Pacific” era with new opportunities, challenges and threats. One of the critical areas of concern is Northeast Asia. In the post-WW II and post-Korean War era the United States, Japan and Korea have been strong allies. However, there are new dynamics at play in an increasingly complex world. Panelists expressed their views on the Asia Pacific region against the backdrop of North Korea's recent provocations, including a nuclear test in January and the launching of a long-range missile in February.

Dr. Alexander Mansourov, professor of Korean Studies at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), John Hopkins University, United States, served as moderator.

Ambassador Christopher Hill, former U.S. ambassador to Korea, noted the panel's professional qualifications: "The collective knowledge of this panel should be enough to solve the North Korean issue. However, it continues to be the major security challenge of this region. It was 10 years ago that North Korea agreed to abandon their weapons. Today they have essentially announced they are no longer interested in denuclearization. It is a challenge. The country is led by leadership that can be described as not very trustworthy and not very steady."



Ambassador Hill explained: "We need to understand that the problem of North Korea is not just a problem for the United States; it is a problem that all of us need to deal with. What North Korea is trying to do with nuclear weapons is to threaten the order of the world. If you look at the issue in the United States, I don't think you can think that North Korea is secondary. It is more and more apparent that it should become a top issue."

Regarding multilateral negotiations, he said, "There is discussion about the Six Party Talks process, whether there should be six, eight, 88 countries? I submit the problem is not the number of countries. The real issue is how those countries can work together to convince North Korea that it should not pursue these dangerous weapons. They should do so in a way that reinforces each other."

In speaking about the role of China and how to support South Korea, Ambassador Hill said: "We cannot say that China is the problem. It is clear that China has to do things, but so do we all. We must all work on this together. It's clear that North Korea is less interested in what we think. We need to do a better job to get their attention. South Korea took a step to pull out of the Kaesong [Industrial] Park. We need to be supportive of what South Korea chooses. We need to be respectful of what South Korea chooses. The ROK [Republic of Korea] has taken an important step."

As for what the United States should do, the ambassador said: "We need to understand that we will take decisions because it's the right thing to do. Sanctions are not easy and not in everyone's favor. It is the only option. The third element is a decision for the U.S. to deploy a missile defense system in South Korea. The U.S. must work with South Korea to protect them. If they want our best antiballistic system, then we should give it to them. We must keep the door open to negotiation. It's difficult to negotiate with someone who forgets what they agreed to before. We've come to an important stage, time in history; we must come together, understand that nuclear weapons are a danger to all of us."

Hon. Na Kyung-won, chair of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, National Assembly, South Korea, said now is the time to consider a regime change in North Korea. She said the concern is that South Korea is not safe under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. There is a need for the United States to be more active. She spoke about the developing partnership between South Korea and China, which is not just economic. Last September, South Korean President Park Geun-hye visited China and watched a military parade standing next to Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Hon. Na believes it is time to talk about changing the policy paradigm and evaluate how peace on the peninsula impacts peace in the region.

Hon. Joseph DeTrani, former special envoy from the United States to the Six Party Talks, said: “We’ve been negotiating with North Korea for 20 years. We’ve seen just in the past few months the nuclear test and satellite launching are violations of UN sanctions. The U.S. is committed to this region. The North Korean nuclear missile issue has to be resolved,” he said, “but recently it’s gotten worse.” The ambassador said he is concerned that “if it’s not resolved, then there is a real potential for an arms race. ‘How do we secure these weapons?’ is the question.” Emphasizing a point made by Ambassador Hill, he said: “We must be proactive. We must deal with all our concerns about the North, nuclear and humanitarian. The ideal objective is reconciliation,” he said.

Ambassador Tetsuya Endo, former Japanese ambassador to the Japan-North Korean Normalization Talks, spoke on “North Korea’s Nuclear Test and the International Community’s Response.” He said, “If it’s true that North Korea has succeeded in developing a booster rocket, that a small bomb capable of being carried by a missile is now within its grasp, then this poses a serious threat.”

What is North Korea’s aim in developing nuclear weapons? Ambassador Endo said this is a “trump card in rectifying its inferiority in North-South relations.” Nuclear weapons are also a “deterrent against the U.S.,” he said. “Diplomatically, a combination of carrot and stick is needed, but for the moment greater emphasis should be given to the stick by stepping up and expanding economic sanctions. The carrot of negotiations should be set aside as an issue for the future. The key to successful sanctions lies with China,” he said, “so Japan, the U.S. and Korea should team together in urging China to cooperate.”

Dr. Heung-soon Park, dean of the Graduate School and professor of International and UN Studies, Sun Moon University, Korea, spoke on “North Korea’s Nuclear Threat and the Korean Peninsula: Challenges and Options.” He said, “The threats and challenges posed by North Korea demand more immediate and effective responses from South Korea, the U.S., the UN, and the international community. ... A more comprehensive approach should be explored for the denuclearization of North Korea and more stable measures toward the eventual reunification of the Korean Peninsula.”

He said: “The idea of the establishment of a new UN office on the Korean Peninsula has been suggested. The background of this idea is that the presence of the UN [a fifth office of the UN] in the Korean Peninsula could serve as a symbolic and practical contributor to the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and East Asia.”

Dr. Park said: “The role of China becomes ever increasingly critical for the peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. It is crucial for Korea to garner cooperation from China in influencing North Korea and for the possible future of the Korean Peninsula.”

The final speaker, Dr. Vladimir Petrovskiy, professor of Far Eastern Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, said that Russia supports dialogue between the two Koreas or contributing to the organization of cultural and sporting events. “The problem,” he said, “is that both Pyongyang and Seoul perceive unification of the country only as mutual absorption of the other.” Dr. Petrovskiy said, “Russia has consistently supported building bridges between Seoul and Pyongyang and favors the steps of the two Koreas toward independent, peaceful unification.

Only interdependence, based on transparency and trust, will ensure preservation and development of the inter-Korean dialogue. Yet the measures of transparency and confidence are not evidence of absence of conflicts and contradictions but only tools to overcome them. If the North and South accept them and stand the test of future interdependence, the Korean problem eventually will be resolved. The main problem to be overcome is North Korea’s missile and nuclear program.” Dr. Petrovskiy questioned whether international sanctions against North Korea are needed and how effective they are.

Session IV: The Critical Challenges of Our Time: Regional Perspectives (Feb. 14)

Mrs. Tomiko Duggan, director of the Office of Public Affairs, UPF, served as moderator. Representatives from around the world with expertise in various fields offered their thoughts on the critical issues facing specific geographic regions, from the Middle East to Europe and Africa, the Americas and Asia Pacific.

Hon. Anoma Gamage, deputy minister of Petroleum Resources Development, Sri Lanka, spoke on the importance and the role of women. Women must be included in politics, she said, because “we are ideally created as agents of change.” Women have an innate ability to be the center of harmony in the family and the society.

Crimes and sexual abuse perpetrated against women are of serious concern and are doubly heinous as they are an indication of the overall health of the nation. There is a greater awareness about women’s rights thanks to the media and technology. Women are entering politics and the business world in greater numbers and having an impact. She called for greater education opportunities for girls, which hopefully will lead to better job prospects. “The voice of women must be heard,” she said.

Dr. Walther Lichem, president of InterPress Service and a retired Austrian ambassador, spoke on the role of regional structures in dealing with critical challenges. He said, “It is important to have global change at the local level.” He called it a “glocal” challenge. What is new is the sense of interdependence. Nothing can be looked at in isolation. Regional cooperation must be linked at the global level. In fact, today no challenges and related agenda sectors can be addressed in isolation.



He said: “The new agenda of the 21st century has only three letters: A-N-D. Every issue must be dealt with in the context of its interrelatedness and interdependencies with other issues and agendas.” Dr. Lichem said: “We must see from the perspective of UPF and the need for regional cooperation. Regional perspectives in all of these challenges, as reflected in institutional development, are of rising importance. No surprise, then, that the United Nations has granted many regional organizations observer status.”

Dr. Shujiro Mizuno, a professor at Rissho University, Japan, spoke about “Family Issues in Japan and Family Education.” In Japan fathers spend less time with their children than do fathers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Korea and Thailand, and child-rearing is considered the mother’s role. Dr. Mizuno said, “We need to share the work of child raising equally between husband and wife. The family is still important for educating the basic values of morality.”

Hon. Issaka Sidibe, president of the National Assembly, Mali, who is second in line to the president, explained the situation facing Mali, in particular with regard to violent extremism. Underdevelopment and weak governance, he said, “create a breeding ground for militancy.” The combination of a weak central government, poverty, drug smuggling, human trafficking, and insecurity, when combined, make the region dangerous and open to extremism. France’s intervention in 2013 helped the Mali government retake the north, and forces from other African Union states have been essential in retaking more Islamist-held territory, but it’s clear, he said, that “the borders are just lines on a map and the interaction between jihadist, rebel and criminal groups in the region is a serious, ongoing problem.” Hon. Sidibe said the best way to stop violent extremism is by supporting development. “It comes down to economics.” Militant groups target unemployed youth for recruitment, he said and called on the international community and the United Nations to find ways to provide jobs and economic support to his country.

In summary, regarding the regional perspectives, there was broad agreement that issues such as climate change, poverty, and terrorism are transnational in nature and trans-institutional in solution. Though each nation and region must find and implement a local strategy and approach, concurrently, there must be collaborative action at the larger level among international organizations, corporations, universities, faith-based organizations, and NGOs, such as UPF.

In closing, there was broad support expressed for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in September 2015, especially with regard to the issues of poverty, food security, gender equality and climate change.

Session V at the Korean National Assembly (Feb. 15)



The group traveled to the National Assembly at the invitation of Parliamentarian Kim Eul-dong and were joined by 20 other Korean lawmakers, international diplomats based in Korea from eight countries, 40 members from the Ministers for Peace association, and more than 40 journalists.

Ms. Kim said, “North Korea’s provocation is a security crisis not just for South Korea but for all East Asia.” She called for the unification of the peninsula. She said this division has “left a painful heart among the people.” Parliamentarian Kim proposed that the UN open a fifth headquarters office, to be located in Korea.

Hon. Chung Ui-hwa, speaker of the National Assembly of Korea, welcomed the ILC delegation. Regarding the recent nuclear test and intercontinental ballistic missile launching, Speaker Chung said, “This kind of careless behavior from North Korea could be addressed effectively by demonstrating a united will and collaboration from parliamentarians all over the world.”

The Keynote Speech by Dr. Sun Jin Moon, UPF chair, provided a good overview and the purpose and goal of the gathering. Reading a message from her mother, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, she also endorsed the idea of the UN considering an Asian office. “Whereas there are UN headquarters offices in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, there is no such office in Asia, even though we are living increasingly in an Asian Pacific age. In many ways, the geopolitical, economic and social center of gravity of our world is shifting toward Asia.”

Congratulatory messages were read, beginning with a video message from U.S. Congressman Ed Royce of California, who recently sent a bill to U.S. President Obama calling for more and stronger sanctions against North Korea. Other speakers included members of parliament from Liberia, Jordan, the Czech Republic, Nepal and Malaysia.

A resolution to establish the International Parliamentarians Peace Association was signed by the leaders. The IPPA will be a world-level association which will work for peace and human development.

Peace Road 2016 and the Universal Ballet Performing Arts Center



Afterward the participants traveled north to Imjingak memorial park in the city of Paju, which is located in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Imjingak is the site of the Bridge of Freedom, where nearly 13,000 prisoners of war were repatriated at the end of the Korean War. Our delegation participated in the Peace Road 2016 Launching.



Congratulatory remarks were given, followed by signing the Peace Road flag, ringing the Peace Bell and releasing white doves. Then representatives from each nation participated in a bicycle ride to raise awareness about the peaceful reunification of the Koreas.

In the evening, the participants were brought to the Universal Ballet Performing Arts Center in Seoul, where they were treated to a performance by the Universal Ballet and the Little Angels Children's Folk Ballet of Korea. This was followed by a farewell banquet and closing reflections.

Conclusion



The successful ILC, convened to discuss the theme “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations,” concluded on a high note, most especially with the birthday celebration of the UPF founders and the inauguration of the International Parliamentarians Peace Association at the National Assembly.

The ILC 2016 highlighted three critical challenges:

1. Climate change: While nations must develop their own strategies, there was a renewed call to recognize and support the UN's efforts, notably last year's Paris Agreement. Natural and man-made crises, such as climate change, lack of sustainable clean energy, extremism, food security, global conflict, and refugees – transcend national boundaries therefore regional and international solutions are needed. Dr. Moon was praised for initiating the Sunhak Peace Prize. Last year's

awardees were Kiribati president Anote Tong and Indian fisheries scientist Dr. M. V. Gupta for their work with climate change and aquaculture, respectively.

2. The role of religion and faith-based organizations: Track II efforts through NGOs such as UPF and faith-based organizations play an important role in addressing the challenges of our time. The founding of the International Parliamentarians Peace Association was hailed as an outstanding initiative to bring together world legislators where their wisdom and experience can be utilized in the service of world peace.

3. Korean peninsula: Korean MP Kim Eul-dong, UPF and Segye Times proposed to establish a fifth UN headquarters office in Korea to focus on the reunification of the peninsula and other regional issues. Strong sanctions will not motivate the North to come to the negotiating table, however, creating a UN office or peace zone in the DMZ could go a long way to reduce tensions in this nation and region.

Discussion led to dialogue on other pressing issues, most particularly the asylum seekers escaping from the wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other conflict zones. Wars are man-made disasters and the nations of the world are being called on to respond in a coordinated and humanitarian manner to the displaced innocent people.

Similarly, climate change has created a new category of people known as “climate refugees” for those who have been displaced by environmental disasters, such as sea level rise, monsoons, drought, and desertification. Leaders are called to act collaboratively and reach region-wide, continent-wide, and global-wide solutions.

To deal with the critical challenges of our time, core values guide UPF’s programs, including: We are one human family created by God; the family is the ‘school of love and peace’; peace comes through dialogue, cooperation and principled action; and service to others is the foundation of a healthy society.

While acknowledging the need for measured use of power – political, economic and military – UPF honors our founders’ legacy and advocates “soft power” solutions and “track two” diplomacy emphasizing the role and responsibility of religious and spiritual leaders to shape our activities in a way that will contribute in some measure to the achievement of world peace.

The ILC 2016 concluded with a renewed sense of hope and optimism.

A Few Reflections from the Participants:

Hon. Yoshinori Ohno, former minister of Defense, Japan:

This international meeting for peace is most significant. North Korea should launch peace instead of missiles. We must seek peace without shedding blood. Japan is a peace-loving country. Japan is the only nation that experienced the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. We all must never repeat this mistake and avoid antagonism and hatred. It is an everlasting pleasure to attend this meeting of UPF.

Hon. Molana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, deputy speaker, House of Representatives, Pakistan:

The ILC was a forum addressing three critical issues: 1) interfaith harmony, 2) peace, and 3) economic development. We are all together on these three issues. We condemn extremism and terrorism. Pakistan has a lot of terrorism, and if it is not eliminated, there can be no prosperity. There is no room for terrorism in Islam, which condemns extremism and terrorism. Mohammed stated that nobody can be a Muslim if he practices this, and we should unite against these extremist practices. My thanks and appreciation to UPF for this peace conference.

Hon. John Doolittle, former U.S. congressman from California:

I am very happy to have attended the ILC conference organized by UPF. If there is one thing that I take away from the conference, it is that all of us would be able to come together to be involved in the work for the vision of peace. I am impressed with the power of the individual. Each person needs to work to make a difference and bring about peace and understanding.

Hon. Leonce S. Sanon, assemblyman, National Assembly, Burkina Faso:

The celebration of True Parents’ Birthday was wonderful, since it was my first time attending it. I appreciated the celebration and would like to participate next year as well. The ILC conference sessions and National Assembly program were fantastic. The “Peace Road” program deserves a compliment, and the Little Angels and Universal Ballet are fantastic.

Hon. Stephen J.H. Zargo, senator, Liberia:

My experience at the celebration of True Parents’ Birthday was historic and memorable and made me feel that I want to attend this ceremony again. The ILC conference sessions were a feast for common minds in search of world peace, especially in the Korean Peninsula. The National Assembly program emphasized

what parliamentarians can do in search of peace. The “Peace Road” program reminded me that the Korean War is the longest war. The Little Angels and the Universal Ballet performances were so good, I didn’t want them to end.

Ms. Farah Minendra Kothare, Healthspace Integrative Medical Centre, New Zealand:

As soon as we arrived in the Chung Pyung area, I felt a deep sense of peacefulness. I can understand why Father Moon chose this location. I felt a warm energy and tranquility in my heart.

Ms. Irene Oloo, League of Women Voters, Kenya:

The Cheongshim Peace World Center is amazing. I’ve never seen a more beautiful place, and it’s dedicated to the world. Dr. Moon is to be congratulated for the kindness and altruism that she and her husband displayed.