

World Summit 2017 Opens the Way to a New Era of Hope: Executive Summary

William Selig
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*“Addressing the Critical Challenges of our Time:
Peace, Security and Human Development”
Universal Peace Federation,
International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace,
Sunhak Peace Prize
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Seoul, Korea -- World Summit 2017, organized by the Universal Peace Federation from February 1 to 5, 2017, provided a comprehensive assessment of peace, security and human development around the world.

In attendance at the five-day program were more than 700 delegates, including more than 400 current and former members of parliament as well as heads of state and government, prime ministers, civil society dignitaries, and religious and women leaders from 120 countries.

The program comprised the Founders Celebration (February 2), the World Summit conference (February 1 to 4), the Inaugural World Assembly of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) (February 2), the Sunhak Peace Prize (SHPP) Award Ceremony (February 3), and the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS) (February 4 and 5).

(1) Founders Celebration. At the CheongShim Peace World Center in Gapyeong, about an hour’s drive northeast of Seoul, the World Summit participants joined more than 30,000 well-wishers on February 2 to commemorate the birthdays of UPF founders Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her husband, the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon. Congratulatory remarks were given by the Hon. Dan Burton, a co-chair of IAPP and a former U.S. congressman from the state of Indiana, who thanked Dr. Moon for her “exemplary leadership to move the world toward true peace based on strong families centered on God, our Heavenly Parent.”

(2) World Summit 2017. More than 60 speakers spoke on the theme “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Peace, Security and Human Development,” offering analyses and recommendations on peace on the Korean Peninsula, environmental degradation, violent conflict, extreme poverty, and the breakdown of the family.

Peace on the Korean Peninsula: Ambassador Christopher Hill, a former U.S. ambassador to South Korea, Iraq, Poland and Macedonia and a former assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, addressed the security challenges coming from North Korea. “The problems of the peninsula concern the entire world and not just the region,” he said. Ambassador Joseph DeTrani, a former U.S. special envoy to the Six-Party Talks, spoke about the problem of nuclear proliferation. “I believe negotiation is attainable,” he said. North Korea has conducted many tests of nuclear weapons and missile development, but “the

realities have to be addressed, hopefully through peaceful negotiations. The alternative could be an arms race in this region.” Hon. Jae-kwon Shim, the chair of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee of the Republic of Korea’s National Assembly, expressed concern about the Trump administration’s pledge to shift diplomacy and trade in favor of the United States and the uncertainty it is causing in the world.

Environmental degradation: H.E. Anote Tong, the former president (2003-2016) of the Republic of Kiribati, described climate change as “the most significant moral challenge for humanity. We’re fighting against ourselves, not another nation.” Hon. Kessai Note, a senator and the former president (2000-2008) of the Marshall Islands, voiced support for nuclear disarmament and apprehension over global warming. President Note is credited with coining the term “ecological refugee” over the possibility that due to sea-level rise and global warming, many islands face ecological disaster. H.E. Federico Franco Gomez, a former president (2012-2013) of Paraguay, expressed gratitude to Rev. Dr. Moon and his pioneering efforts to develop fish farming in the Chaco region of Paraguay and Brazil. He believes that Rev. Dr. Moon’s vision to end poverty and protect the environment through fish farming and tapping into the oceans’ resources is very viable.

Violent conflict: This theme touched the hearts of the collective assembly, particularly violence toward women and children and the growing menace of human trafficking. Hon. Chandrani Bandara, Sri Lanka’s minister of Women and Child Affairs, spoke on the situation in her nation and, in particular, about programs that empower women and secure the rights and protection of children.

Extreme Poverty: Hon. Issa Mardo Djibir, a member of parliament in Chad, said: “There is no more serious threat to peace and security than poverty and especially inequality. Poverty is a social injustice that paves the way for all manifestations of violence under the guise of political, cultural, identity or religious conflicts. There can be no lasting peace without development, and there can be no inclusive development without good governance.”

Breakdown of the family: Dr. Lek Thaveetermsakul, the vice chair of UPF-Asia, pointed out that many of the critical challenges we face today originate from the breakdown of families and family values. Mr. Tuo-Huan Chen, the regional secretary general of UPF for the Chinese Region, explained about the dangers of comprehensive sex education, which is being promoted in schools around the world. He emphasized the need for education to promote abstinence before marriage and fidelity between husband and wife.

In her keynote address, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, founder of the IAPP, gave an eloquent overview of the philosophy and understanding that has guided her life. God, the original owner of this world, had a plan, a dream that all humankind would be united as one family under God, our universal Parent, she said, but due to the disobedience of the first ancestors, self-centeredness entered into human nature. God is frustrated because so many people still are ignorant and don’t understand the true relationship between God and humanity, she said. God has a plan to save humanity centered on a messianic ideology: “The problems of the world can only be resolved through the advent of the True Parents.” She asked everyone in attendance to promote the IAPP and become national messiahs to their nations.

(3) Inaugural IAPP World Assembly. More than 400 parliamentarians joined with Korean parliamentarians, members of the diplomatic corps, and distinguished local dignitaries for the launch of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) on February 2 at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea. Dr. Thomas Walsh, the president of UPF International, served as the moderator. The panelists were a prominent group of specialists representing different regions of the world. Hon. Matt Salmon, a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1994-2000, 2012-2016) from the state of Arizona, focused his remarks on the family. The most important thing that leaders can do is to strengthen the families, he said. “As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live,” he said. H.E. Milan Dunovic, the vice president of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, spoke about good governance. “The obligation of all politicians is to serve their country,” he said.

Representing the Korean perspective on the panel were two parliamentarians. Hon. Sye-kyun Chung, the speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, said: “We are living in an age of uncertainty and unease. There is conflict, climate change, economic polarization, discrimination. . . . We need alliances and cooperation to face these challenges. . . . We need strong cooperation and alliances to tackle the nuclear ambitions of North Korea.” Hon. Yoo-chul Won, a member of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee of the National Assembly, proposed a “Grand Korea Silk Road” as a way to connect the peninsula with Russia and China through a network of roads, tunnels, and the use of ferries to carry trains. Hon. Dr. Rachel Carling-Jenkins, a member of the Legislative Council of Australia’s Victoria state, called on the world’s leaders to have compassion for the most vulnerable -- children, refugees, the disabled, the elderly, the poor. Rt. Hon. Richard Msowoya, the speaker of the Malawi National Assembly, spoke about protecting the human rights of those with albinism.

Hon. Hilik Bar, the deputy speaker of Israel’s Knesset, called on the parliamentarians “to act together

within our parliaments to help our societies build bridges for peace.” Hon. Alberto Alfaro Jimenez, the president of the National Assembly of Costa Rica, offered his nation as a role model for democracy. When Costa Rica had a border dispute with neighboring Nicaragua, he said, instead of resorting to violence, the two countries took the case to the International Court of Justice.

Hon. Jose de Venecia Jr., a co-chair of IAPP and the former speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives (1992-1998, 2001-2008), proposed five focus areas for IAPP: building peace between the leaders of Sunni and Shia Islam in order to create peace in the Middle East; hosting an international conference and campaign against narcotics; addressing international poverty and the growing gap between rich and poor; taking steps toward preserving the environment; and working toward reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

(4) Sunhak Peace Prize Award Ceremony. For 2017, the refugee crisis was the core theme of the prize, which was founded on the vision for peace to build “One Family under God.” On February 3 the prestigious prize was awarded to Dr. Gino Strada, founder of Emergency, an organization that provides medical and surgical care in Africa and the Middle East, and Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, founder of the Afghan Institute for Learning, which provides educational programs for refugees in Afghanistan. The peace prize, according to Hon. Il Sik Hong, the chair of the prize selection committee and a former president of Korea University, is presented to “those who have dedicated their lives in service to humanity and the noble ideal of peace.” Dr. Strada and Dr. Yacoobi represent the “heroes of today,” he said, who go beyond national borders to express love and service to humanity.

(5) ICUS. The 23rd International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences was held on February 4 and 5. Hon. Biman Chand Prasad, a member of Fiji’s parliament and the director of the Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, served as moderator for this session, which dealt with the theme “Earth’s Environmental Crisis and the Role of Science.” Professor J. Martin Ramirez of Harvard University said: “Faith is a natural part of human cognition. Science per se is not good or bad. It can be a catalyst for social change, economic growth, saving countless lives, but it can also be dangerous and used for harmful purposes.” Professor Luc Montagnier, the 2008 Nobel Prize winner in Physiology and Medicine, spoke about the health challenges of the modern world and specifically on the electromagnetic effects of bacterial DNA on human DNA. Dr. Glen Rein, a senior researcher at Innovative Biotechnical Studies in the United States, described the interconnectedness of water, soil, food, and human beings, and how the contamination of one contaminates all the others.

Conclusion: Keynote topics of World Summit 2017 and the programs hosted by the Sunhak Peace Prize Foundation and the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences included global conflict, the breakdown of the family, protection of the environment, and much more. Hon. Paulo Pisco, a member of Portugal’s parliament, aptly summarized the state of the world: “The global order is falling apart, caused by selfish political decisions that are being taken without caring about its consequences nor of the human factor.” In the face of so many challenges to peace, he summed up the general consensus of the participants and the call to action. “We should make a strong call for reasonability to all political deciders and public opinions.” Appreciating the interconnectedness of our nations, he said, “We must put forward the common good, the sense of humanity and solidarity, accepting our part of responsibility, either in relation to the tragedy of migration in the European Union or in relation to the global environment or to sustainable development. Responsibility, humanity and solidarity are the key words for people and to the planet.”

The fourth World Summit, representing almost 70 percent of the world’s nations, brought a fresh perspective to the critical challenges of our time. The participants fully embraced the insightful interpretation of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who said: “In our hearts we all desire to have a united world -- a peaceful, happy, united world -- but so many walls block our way. ... All nations, all of you, must attend God, our Creator, our Heavenly Parent, in your nations in order for world peace to come.”

There was a unanimous agreement that universal principles based on compassion, empathy and religious tolerance must be the bedrock on which to advance a world of lasting peace, and that peaceful coexistence and shared values among the people of the world are the way to confront the critical issues that we face on the local, national, regional and global levels. The participants departed World Summit 2017 with an empowering sense that we have successfully entered a new era of hope.