

## UPF International's Elders' Roundtable Proposed as Instrument for Peace

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**Chung Pyung, Korea** -- The International Elders' Roundtable for the Realization of a Heavenly Unified World was convened on February 24, 2023 under the auspices of UPF's International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP) and *Think Tank 2022* in partnership with the Korean Senior Citizens' Association (KSCA). The program was held before a live audience at the Hyojeong Cultural Center in Chung Pyung, about one hour east of Seoul, and streamed worldwide on PeacelinkTV.

The purpose of the event was to explain the basic concept and raise awareness of the initiative, which will be inaugurated in early May during the *Summit 2023 and Leadership Conference* and then later promoted around the world.



In his keynote address, former U.S. Speaker of the House Hon. Newt Gingrich eloquently summarized the initiative: "Elder statesmen and elders from all professions will come together with the elders of Korea to help solve the problems in Korea as well as the problems of the world. Elders are the guiding lights of wisdom for the realization of peace in the world."

### Welcoming remarks

**Dr. Yoon Young-Ho**, chair of *Think Tank 2022*'s promotion committee: "The Elders' Roundtable will approach the role of elders as a source of wisdom and as the elders in the family who can play an important role in solving the issues in modern society. When we see elders as grandparents...then [we can recognize that they] indeed have a great role in promoting healthy, happy families and happy societies."



**H.E. Maithripala Sirisena**, 7th president of Sri Lanka (2015-2019) and a member of the ISCP: "As an elder, I am proud to be associated with this initiative." The population of elderly individuals has been gradually rising in the past decade and will have a significant impact on geographical and cultural politics globally. Most of the world's leaders and heads of state are elderly. "The reason [for this initiative] is very clear and loud: Youth and adults have vision and enthusiasm, but elders provide a path by their experience and knowledge. Hence, for there to be eternal peace and prosperity, there must be cooperation between elders, adults and youth in our society."

#### **Congratulatory remarks**

**H.E. Luc Adolphe Tiao**, prime minister of Burkina Faso (2011-2014) and member of the ISCP-Africa: "The value and wisdom of elders are highly sought after and are a great asset to an interdependent and prosperous society. Just like grandparents in the family, elders in society are the guarantors of solidarity and the ideals of unity."

**H.E. Nevers Mumba**, 8th vice president of Zambia (2003-2004), extended his congratulations on the conference and warm wishes to the founders "for this beautiful initiative." He described elders as a "a reservoir of wisdom and the custodians of culture and heritage."

**Dame Pearllette Louisy**, 5th governor-general of St. Lucia (1997-2017), expressed her admiration and respect for Korea, which was one of the world's poorest countries at the time of the Korean War, but thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Korean people, it has become one of the top ten advanced nations in the world today. Conveying her hope for the reunification of the peninsula and support for the Elders' Roundtable, Dame Louisy said: "It is everyone's fervent hope that the senior citizens of North and South Korea will meet again soon in Seoul or Pyongyang."

**H.E. Paul Biyoghé Mba**, 7th prime minister of Gabon (2009-2012), extended warm greetings to the founders and attendees and good wishes for the success of the elders' initiative. The youth will be impressed and work to [emulate] this initiative and be inspired "to work for a better world and a world of peace."

**Hon. Dan Burton**, U.S. House of Representatives (1983-2013) and international co-chair of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), reaffirmed the initiative's approach to peace by calling on elders to lead and guide all generations toward peace based on family ethics and values.

**Bishop Don Meares**, chair of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD)- North America, issued a clarion call for "all the elders who are faith leaders, elder statesmen and professionals in every field to come together for the Elders' Roundtable." As faith leaders, "We must stand on the very vanguard for advancing faith, love and peace, because this is what the Kingdom of God is."

**Mr. Jim Rogers**, advisor to the International Association for Peace and Economic Development, congratulated the attendees on the launch of the Elders' Roundtable. He believes that it has great potential to "contribute to promoting better inter-Korean relations and peace on the Korean Peninsula."

**H.E. Alfred Moisiu**, 4th president of Albania (2002-2007) and chairman of the ISCP-Balkans: "Since the family is the building block of society, respecting elders means to respect and honor the past, inherit the wisdom accumulated through experience, and build a strong foundation for the future." UPF in the

Balkans is cooperating closely with the Podgorica Club, a forum of former presidents and prime ministers in the Balkans, which "brings to the leaders of our nations the wisdom and experience as former leaders."

The final congratulatory remarks were given by **Hon. Cho Kyu-Hong**, Korean minister of health and welfare: "An aging society is a global issue as well as an issue in Korea. It is urgent that we ensure senior citizens live with dignity. The Ministry of Health and Welfare looks forward to the various insights and wisdom [that will be shared] and will listen intently so that we can strengthen health policies and ensure the welfare for senior citizens in Korea."

Peace Performance I – Korean Percussion Band



## International Elders' Roundtable

### Session I: The Role of Elders in Achieving a Permanent Peaceful World

#### Keynote addresses

**H.E. Yusuf Gilani**, 18th prime minister of Pakistan (2008-2012), provided an in-depth analysis of peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula, which is closely linked with the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole. He also spoke about the impact of climate change and the devastating 2022 floods in Pakistan. He expressed his solidarity to the Elders' Roundtable and the hope that it will contribute to bringing positive outcomes in the future.

**Hon. Newt Gingrich**, 50th U.S. Speaker of the House (1995-1999), congratulated the organizers for "emphasizing the centrally important role of the elders sharing their wisdom to guide the future generations." The former House speaker said, "The qualities of faith, family traditions and our fundamental values come from our elders. Therefore, we are calling upon the precious elders of Korea to come together at a most important time in history to teach the generations that follow. We emphasize that the most essential cornerstone of a good nation is strong families and that have faith in God, our Heavenly Parent."

**H.E. Parmanand Jha**, 1st vice president of Nepal (2008-2015): "Elders traditionally hold crucial roles in supporting both formal and informal education in society. They impart tradition, knowledge, culture, values and lessons using orality and through role modelling traditional practices. Especially in Asian society, elders are accorded with great respect. Elders are wiser than young people. They are better experienced and have a lot of knowledge. Respecting elders shows that we are civilized and cultured. Based on my own personal experiences with and the lifelong works of UPF's founders, they are the greatest exemplary figures and role models as elders in the world. Therefore, I take this initiative with great significance."

**Hon. Lee Sang-Hoon**, 26th Korean minister of national defense (1988-1990) and chair of the National Elders' Roundtable: "It is time to pursue peace and stability and for elders to come together in solidarity to share insights and wisdom. ... The Elders' Roundtable will provide the platform to raise our voices to ensure human rights and universal values beyond borders."

Peace Performance II – Korean Band Choi Ye-rim

A video of congratulatory messages from leaders from different sectors of society in Korea was shown.



## Session 2: Vision and Activities of the Elders' Association to Realize a Heavenly Unified Korea

### Speakers

**Hon. Kim Ho-II**, chairman of the Korean Senior Citizens' Association: "Senior citizens have wisdom, insights and experiences that cannot be found in any textbook. If one elder passes away, it is the same as losing the wisdom that that person has. There is a saying that if a person loses their way, they should look for an old horse, because an elderly animal always knows the way home. That shows there is priceless wisdom in our senior citizens. Many young people have lost their way. They are not respecting their parents. Our generation must come together and provide guidance to the young generation. This must be our calling and our vision. It is with this perspective that we are initiating the Elders' Roundtable."

**Cho Man-Woong**, co-chair of the Korean Elder Citizens' Association for a Heavenly Unified Korea: "It is our hope that elders, with their lifetime of experience and wisdom, will join together in solidarity to help build up our nations. The world experienced the pandemic for the past three years. It showed us that we desperately need to collaborate, cooperate and communicate beyond borders. Through our vision of integration, and pursuing the global values of inclusiveness and love, elders can lead the movement to overcome the world's challenges."

**Yoon Jong-Ro**, co-chair of the Korean Elder Citizens' Association for a Heavenly Unified Korea: "As senior citizens and elders of society, we have a responsibility to fulfill. Last year, the Korean Elder Citizens' Association gathered around 3,000 elders and pastors in Korea for an education program. When elders from around the world come together, then we take a step closer to global peace. The World Trade Organization (WTO) offers an interesting example. It took eight years [for leaders] to reach an agreement to lower trade barriers, [which reformed the international trade system]. The Elders' Roundtable is more focused on the spiritual side of life, but [this example] proves the point that when serious and dedicated leaders come together for a common cause, then challenges can be overcome. My hope is that the solidarity displayed here will create a huge ripple effect around the world."

**Dr. Thomas G. Walsh**, chairman of UPF International: "Congratulations to the founders for their leadership, the timeliness of the program and emphasis on the role of elders. Elders play a key role with their wisdom as teachers, counselors and guides for the coming generations." Dr. Walsh urged the audience to read the *Statement on the Role of Elders in Realizing a Heavenly Unified World*, ([click here](#)) which builds on the Universal Peace Charter launched at the World Summit 2022.

The three-hour program concluded with a certificate of appointment and medals presentation ceremony to the members of the Elders' Roundtable, who will play a key role in the May program.

### Dignitaries presenting the medals

- H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, 7th president of Sri Lanka
- H.E. Yusuf Gilani, 18th prime minister of Pakistan
- H.E. Parmanand Jha, 1st vice president of Nepal

- Dr. Yoon Young-Ho, chair of the promotion committee of *Think Tank 2022*



Roundtable members receiving the medals

- Hon. Lee Sang-Hoon, 26th Korean minister of national defense
- Hon. Kim Ho-II, chairman of the Korean Senior Citizens' Association
- Cho Man-Woong, co-chair of the Korean Elder Citizens' Association for a Heavenly Unified Korea
- Yoon Jong-Ro, co-chair of the Korean Elder Citizens' Association for a Heavenly Unified Korea

### Closing

Among the attendees, there was a unanimous sense of gratitude for this new initiative. Our world stands at a pivotal moment in history. More than ever, authentic and intergenerational leadership is needed to build a world of universal and lasting peace.



## **Statement on the Role of Elders in Realizing a Heavenly Unified World Rooted in the Universal Peace Charter**

*We participants in the Elders' Conference of Hope convened on February 25, 2023 in Seoul, Korea, and sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation, are united by an awareness of the essential and unique role and responsibility of the elders of society in assuring the stability and well-being of our nation. We share a common commitment to uplifting the core values of our nation and to working together to establish a peaceful and prosperous world in which all people live together in harmony and with dignity.*

**Recognizing** that all human beings originate ultimately from the same source, God, our Heavenly Parent, and, as a result, we are all members of one human family, One Family of Humanity Under God; and,

**Acknowledging** that the basic human relationship that exists between human beings and our Heavenly Parent is that of being children of our Heavenly Parent, and therefore, the Parenthood of God and Heavenly Parentism are the foundation of rebuilding our families, our societies and our nation; and,

**Affirming** the fact that, as the sons and daughters of the Heavenly Parent, we are endowed not only with unique reasoning capacities, but also a capacity to love and care for one another and to work together to build a good and heavenly society; and,

**Appreciating** the fact that we, as human beings, are blessed by our Heavenly Parent with the unique dignity that calls us to honor, value and respect one another, and to understand Heavenly Parentism is the foundation of human rights; and,

**Noting** not only that we are endowed with basic human rights, but also that we are created to exercise our own responsibility, to be accountable for our actions, and to understand that it is our duty to live our lives in such a way as to contribute to the well-being of ourselves, our families, our neighbors, our fellow-citizens, our nation and the world; and,

**Acknowledging** that, rooted in the ideal of Heavenly Parentism, the family is the most basic unity of society, and that its health is essential for the well-being of society and the nation; and,

**Recognizing** that it is through the family that we transmit core values and traditions from one generation to the next, particularly through the guidance of parents and grandparents; and,

**Respecting** the essential role of the grandparents in both the family system and the nation, serving as the anchor of stability and the primary teacher and guide for future generations; and,

**Recalling** the Seoul Resolution, affirmed during the World Summit 2022, which was convened by the Universal Peace Federation in Seoul, Korea, in February 2022 with representatives from 157 nations having diplomatic ties with either North and South Korea, and that called for reconciliation and peace on that peninsula, guided by a vision of “two states toward one nation: one peninsula, one people, one culture” which opens the way to a “heavenly unified Korea”; and,

**Seeking** to expand that vision to the wider global community, toward a heavenly unified world; and,

**Pledging to work** for the benefit of the whole universal human family, with the aim of creating a world of freedom, peace, unity and happiness;

**We hereby propose the following:**

1. To affirm and uplift the elders of society and the nation as the primary and essential guides and teachers of the youth and future generations.
2. To establish an Association of Elders within the community, the wider society, the nation and the world, dedicated to building a world of universal and lasting peace.
3. To promote the value of the natural family as the foundation of the good society and the stable nation.
4. To affirm not only the role of parents within the family system, but also, and most essentially, the grandparents.
5. To raise awareness of the respect due to elders and grandparents for the sake of the society and its culture, as well as all its core values and traditions.
6. To utilize the capacities of the elders as counselors and advisors to all sectors of society, including government, civil society, religion, academia, business, the media and the arts.
7. To promote the strengthening of civil society institutions as essential for lasting peace.
8. To encourage good relations among religions, cultures and civilizations through dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation.
9. To engage all sectors of society—government, religion, civil society, academia, media, business, etc.—in this noble effort.
10. To engage with the Associations of the Universal Peace Federation on the points mentioned in this resolution, and to form Elders Associations that work together with these Associations.

**Resolved on this day, February 24, 2023, by 1,000 elders of *Think Tank 2022* from 193 nations around the world.**