

What is the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace

Thomas Walsh
February 1, 2017



Parliamentarians play a central role in nations throughout the world, representing the people, respecting the rule of law, and upholding human rights; in effect, parliamentarians work to build safe, secure, stable and peaceful societies.

The "International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace" has been launched as a worldwide association of parliamentarians which provides a forum to bring their experience and wisdom to bear in the search for solutions to our world's problems. Parliamentarians from around the world have offered their remarks on the importance of their work and the value of increased cooperation and collaboration in the search for innovative solutions to some of the critical issues that we face on the local, national, regional and global levels, from climate change to the rise of extremist ideologies to humanitarian disasters and conflict.

Resolution in Support of the Formation of International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace

February 15, 2016, at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea

Since its inception, the Universal Peace Federation has worked closely with parliamentarians from around the world to build a world of lasting peace, based on universal principles.

The founders of the Universal Peace Federation, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, launched the global "Parliamentarians for Peace" initiative in 2001 centered on the Ambassadors for Peace. This initiative was also a point of focus of the 2005 Universal Peace Federation Inaugural Tour to 120 nations, and has brought together many parliamentarians from around the world through diverse programs aimed at contributing to the realization of lasting peace.

These programs include UPF Asia's "Parliamentarians for Peace" seminars, featuring parliamentarians from Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and other nations; UPF Africa's "Parliamentarians for Peace" programs in 2007, featuring parliamentarians from Nigeria and Sierra Leone; UPF Nepal's establishment of a "Parliamentarians Peace Council" in 2014; and UPF Oceania's "Parliamentarians for Peace" conferences that involved parliamentarians from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Island nations. These programs have brought together parliamentarians from around the world, forming an international network of men and women who are committed to solving the critical challenges of our time and realizing a world of lasting peace.

As we know, our world faces a wide range of problems, including territorial disputes, religious and racial conflict, environmental degradation, climate change, violent extremism, poverty, hunger, nuclear proliferation and corruption. Each of these are serious threats to human development and to the realization of peace in our world.

As we gather in Seoul, we are especially mindful that the Korean peninsula remains divided. North Korea

continues to develop its nuclear weapons program, raising serious concerns all over the world that military tensions are rising throughout Northeast Asia. Even now, 60 years after the Korean War, it remains impossible to communicate or freely travel between the two nations. It is time for the international community to wholeheartedly contribute to the realization of peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The division of the Korean peninsula cannot be seen as a domestic issue; it is an urgent issue that requires the interest and cooperation of Asia and the entire world. It is time for humanity to embrace universally shared values. Let us work together, going beyond differences of ideology, race, nationality, and religion. Let us show the example and pursue the path of mutual cooperation and mutual prosperity, building a world of lasting and sustainable peace that can be bequeathed to future generations.

Therefore, we, the more than 150 parliamentarians, representing more than 40 nations, who are participating in the 2016 International Leadership Conference on "Addressing the Critical Challenges of our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations," convened in Seoul, Korea, keenly feel the necessity to form a world-level parliamentary association through which we can work together for peace and human development. Gathered at the Korean National Assembly, we hereby propose and resolve to establish the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace.

Background and Purpose of the IAPP

An Emerging Force

Within the UPF Ambassadors for Peace network, there are many activists involved with representative democracy in their nations and regions. Parliamentarians for Peace forums are emerging as key to action-oriented peace initiatives.

Parliamentarians for Peace forums include:

- A trans-religious and trans-national framework for the exchange of ideas, experiences and insights into dealing with the challenges of our times, with particular attention to peacebuilding, reconciliation and development.
- An integrated and principled framework for developing effective plans of action and sound governance capacities.
- Access to a range of human development and peace-building programs necessary for durable solutions.
- Connections with a broad global network of religious and civil society leaders, government leaders, women leaders, members of the media, peace-builders and more.

Supporting the UN

Seeking to augment the efforts of the United Nations whose objectives it shares, UPF works in over 190 nations with other international, regional and national organizations, as well as with the UN, its agencies and related organizations.

Through the Parliamentarians for Peace forums, Ambassadors for Peace are also provided with significant opportunities to strengthen their capacity to achieve and sustain superior performance as leaders and therefore improve the quality of governance of their institutions, nations and organizations.

At the same time, by utilizing the UPF's strategic foci and integrated methodology for peacebuilding and development, Parliamentarians for Peace can leverage their strengths and resources for peace and development within their nations, their region and globally through UPF's Global Peace Council and growing network of regional and national Peace Councils.

Effecting Change

At the end of the day, parliamentarians are faced with the challenges of maintaining the highest standards of leadership while effecting change at the national and local levels on all global issues – of education, security, development, crime, health, corruption, infrastructures, elections, justice and so much more.

Recognizing the enormity of this complex work, Parliamentarians for Peace are provided significant knowledge, tools and support through the Ambassadors for Peace network; the Global Peace Council and regional Peace Councils; and the UPF's growing alliance of families, religious communities, educational institutions, media connections and affiliated NGOs and civil society organizations.



Key Action Areas

During the February 2017 World Summit in Seoul, Korea, a group of more than 500 parliamentarians will convene to explore ways that parliamentarians and those responsible in government can better work together and optimize the strengths, uniqueness and resources of the UPF. Those gathered recognize the following as key action areas:

- Peacebuilding, interreligious reconciliation and development
- Peace and character education
- Curbing corruption
- Strengthening democracy and good governance

Working Strategy

At the 2017 World Summit, Parliamentarians for Peace have the opportunity to identify a number of next steps:

- Address the root causes of problems by engaging in and encouraging self-reflection and self-evaluation.
- Combat corruption through the exercise of their vote on various budgetary issues and by supporting not only traditional academic education but also values education.
- Work to establish bi-partisan peacebuilding committees or caucuses in their legislature.
- In nations/regions where conflict is endemic and people have lost hope for genuine peace, conduct Ambassadors for Peace programs and seminars to rebuild hope and confidence.
- Work across sectors and as groups to eradicate corruption that knows no boundaries.
- Find ways to network and work together with delegates from other nations, perhaps by creating friendship groups or similar clubs.
- Support the partnership between religion and politics as a substantive means to target daily behavior for real transparency.

Support character education programs in their nations as a practical way to support peace and development while also addressing the problems of HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence, and the curbing of corruption at the grassroots level.