

Women Leaders' on a Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula

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February 24, 2022



Promotional Flier for the event



On February 3, Think Tank 2022 Global Forum conducted a very inspiring live session for women leaders as part of the International World Summit 2022, which took place in Korea a week later. This session entitled: "Women Leaders' Leverage on Peacebuilding" was centered on the overarching theme of Toward a Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, and included speakers and First Ladies from North, Central and South America. This event was a collaborative effort between the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), the

International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP).



Moderated by Cindy Pfeiffer, IAFLP Coordinator for North America, the program started off with welcoming remarks from Honorable Mrs. Yumi Hogan, First Lady of Maryland. As a woman of Korean heritage and the first Korean First Lady in U.S. government, Mrs. Hogan holds a special place in her heart for the goals of the Think Tank 2022 to promote Korean reunification. She shared her own personal commitment to lead by example, use her gifts to serve the community, and to leave a place better than how she found it. Through her work as a First Lady, she's been able to support children and families in need and encourage young women to become leaders of the future.

Echoing the call to empower young people, Honorable Madame Emilia Alfaro de Franco, former First Lady and Senator of Paraguay, started the panel discussion by highlighting the ways

women can uniquely contribute to peace. Based on her own experience in government, she said, "Women, whatever the place they are occupying, change realities with great dedication, protagonism, and audacity." Thus women have been a fundamental link in building democracy in Paraguay and also bringing peace among nations. She expressed her heart for the large population of Koreans living in her country, whom she thinks to connect with as a bridge.

Honorable Mrs. Ann-Marie Davis, First Lady of the Bahamas, was looking forward to addressing the

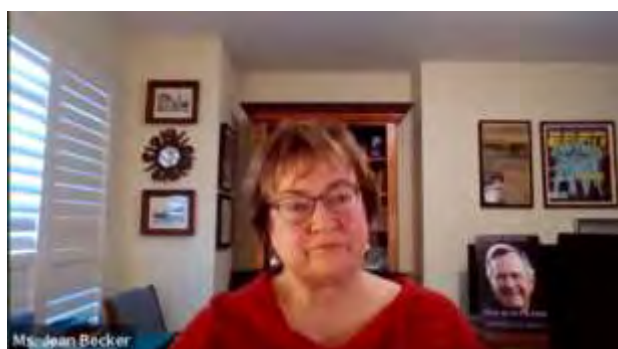
Think Tank 2022 Global Forum, but due to pressing matter in her home country she could only send her wishes.



Dr. Rima Salah, Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, then spoke very impactfully based on her many years in UNICEF and many other peacebuilding roles as well as personal experience as a refugee. Her vision for peace was formed from her childhood in refugee camps where she experienced first-hand the devastating situations of women and children. Even in hopeless situations, it is the women and grandmothers who keep the traditions and cultures alive, providing stability for the families. On the world stage as well, women leaders and first ladies have made tremendous impacts. Women can be the agents of change, Dr. Salah stated, by claiming the importance of being part of the discussion.



On this rousing call for women to speak with confidence, Jean Becker, Former Chief of Staff for George H. W. Bush, shared about her 29 years of service to the Bush family. She experienced President H. W. Bush's efforts to support reunification in Germany and improve relations with Japan despite criticism. Mrs. Becker also experienced the important impact First Lady Barbara Bush had on improving relations between countries through relationships with the wives of other nations' presidents. "We must not assign bad motives to people who disagree with us." Rather we can seek to know the other person and listen to what they say.



This thought-provoking panel discussion continued with comments by Angelika Selle, President of WFP USA, who highlighted the unique ability of women's peace leadership in solving issues. "Women," she said, "often use their God-given creativity and capacities of mediation, facilitation, and problem solving to bring harmony among fighting siblings and often are able to see conflicts through the lens of their heart, the heart of a mother." She then posed the question to the panel, "How can women contribute from the outside to create greater trust between North and South Korea and defuse intense emotions of hostility and fear on both sides?"

This opened up a Q and A session bringing everything together, and connecting to the overall purpose of the Think Tank 2022 sessions. The presenters commented on why the issues of Korean reunification are relevant to more than just the peninsula. Dr. Salah commented, "What happens in one country affects other countries. It's time for women to understand the issues that happen in other countries." Mrs. Pfeiffer pointed out that when women were included in the peace process, there is a 35% greater chance of peace being achieved. There is a saying that "everyone wants to change the world, but no one wants to do the

dishes." As pointed out by Mrs. Selle and Ms. Becker, women can make the difference since women are doers, we lead by example, and take action.



The valuable lessons and insights shared by the amazing First Ladies and those who have worked directly with First Ladies demonstrate how women can make a huge impact for peace on the local and global stage. Women's efforts may not always make headline news, but it is also the behind-the-scenes work of those who are willing to roll up their sleeves and do what needs to be done, which can make all the difference.

To gain more insight and to listen to these remarkable ladies first hand the recording is available here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=L813fbMZSo

