

IAPP hosts Session Three of ILC2021: Parliamentarians Contributing to Peace in Korea

Ursula McLackland

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Asia Pacific -- The International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) hosted Session Three of the International Leadership Conference 2021 (ILC2021) -- Asia Pacific program, held on April 29, 2021. Current and former parliamentarians from six nations (Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, New Zealand, Thailand, and Uzbekistan) and a former minister of government (Thailand) shared their perspectives on the theme, "The Role of Parliamentarians in Contributing to Peace on the Korean Peninsula."

The moderator of the session, **Mr. Santosh Kumar Paudel**, *coordinator of IAPP-Asia Pacific*, welcomed all the participants and introduced the speakers. In his welcome remarks, **Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal**, *chair of UPF- and IAPP-Asia Pacific and a former minister of the government of Nepal*, highlighted the purpose of the conference. He further affirmed that peace in and the reunification of the Korean Peninsula is possible through the positive endeavors of parliamentarians.



The opening remarks were given by special guest **Hon. Bhubaneswar Kalita**, *a member of parliament, Rajya Sabha (upper house), in India and chairman of the Northeast MP's Forum (NEMP) and regional chair of IAPP-South Asia*. He said, "The long conflict has not been concluded, but the same people of the [Korean Peninsula] should not remain separated. In this great alliance, the role of UPF and parliamentarians is highly important." He has also praised the role UPF's founders in the reunification process.

The *international coordinator of IAPP and president of UPF International, Dr. Michael Jenkins*, opined that parliamentarians represent the people and foster international relations with all nations. The people's representatives can and should come together to dialogue for the peaceful reunification of Korea. He acknowledged IAPP's accomplishments in its short history and explained how it developed for greater peace internationally. He proposed many ways to open dialogues within both Koreas.

Similarly, *director general of the Asian Cultural Council (ACC) and a member of parliament from Cambodia, Hon. Suos Yara*, highlighted the urgency of peace. He spoke about his country's four decade civil war and said, "We know and love peace. War has taught us the importance of peace." The win-win strategy of Cambodian Prime Minister H.E. Hun Sen has been a model for other nations and regions, including the Korean Peninsula, he noted.



Former assistant speaker of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, Hon. Ross Robertson, shared his experience of 27 years in parliament. He said that faith and love can play an important role in establishing peace. Faith-based organizations can also play a critical role and foundation in the reunification of Korea.

Member of Parliament from Indonesia and chairman of KOSGORO, Hon. Dave Laksono, gave a presentation on, "Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: From the Parliamentary Diplomacy Perspective." He pointed out that parliamentarians can be bridges to the world and establish a common ground for political communication and discussion.

Member of Parliament and government whip from Fiji, Hon. Alvick Maharaja, emphasized the importance of the peaceful reunification of Korea, saying that it will be a foundation for world peace.

Former minister of foreign affairs, minister of public health and minister of education of Thailand, Hon. Dr. Krasae Chanwongse, spoke about his experience with people from both Koreas and his visit to Germany. He said, "The unification of Germany can be an example to help unify the separated Korean people." He further appreciated the role that UPF has been playing in this noble cause.

The last panelist was *former deputy chairman of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, Hon. Sharbat Abdullaev*. She described relations between Uzbekistan and Korea and commented that their relations will be stronger and the reunification of Korea will be a catalyst for world peace.

In his closing remarks, *the minister of mass media of Sri Lanka, Hon. Keheliya Rambukwella*, thanked UPF for its endeavors to advance world peace, harmony and interdependence. He reiterated that the continuous efforts of the UPF founders are highly appreciated. Hon. Rambukwella expressed that Sri Lanka and its people are always in favor of a peaceful reunification of North and South Korea and offered good wishes for the achievement of this.

The QandA session was facilitated by **Dr. Venus Augustin**, *vice chair of UPF-Asia Pacific*.