

IAAP hosts Session Seven of ILC2021: Peaceful Reunification of Korea

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Asia Pacific - The International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) hosted Session Seven of the International Leadership Conference (ILC) 2021 - Asia Pacific program, held on May 1, 2021, under the theme, "Toward the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Academic Perspective." A total of 2,333 people registered for the session and 642 people from 43 nations attended it via Zoom while thousands have viewed it on YouTube and Facebook.

The program began with the moderator, Dr. Julius Malicdem, coordinator of IAAP-Asia Pacific, welcoming all the attendees.

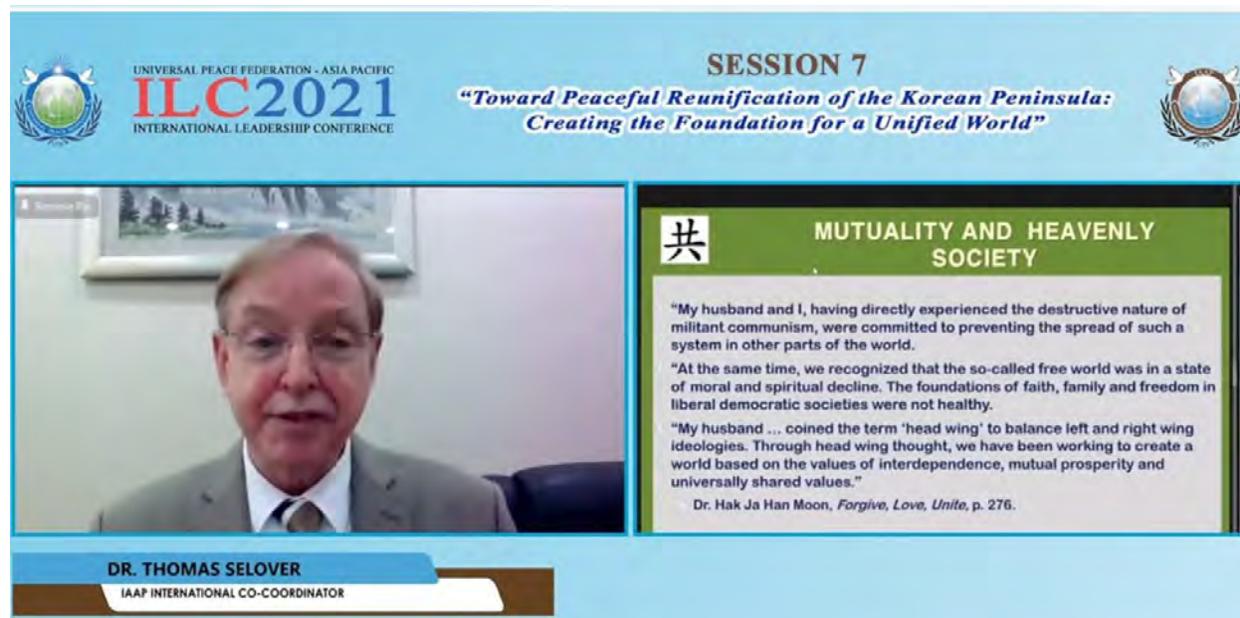


Special presentations on the "Theory of a Heavenly Unified Korea" were given by IAAP international coordinators, Dr. Thomas Selover, president of the Sun Hak UP Graduate University, and Dr. Sung Bae Jin, chairman of the HJ Academy of Arts and Science.

Dr. Selover underscored that the ideals of mutual prosperity, universally shared values and interdependence, which have been espoused and lived by UPF founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, will be the very basis of a modern unified Korea. He continued, highlighting the continuous efforts of the founders and UPF in the pursuit for peace in Korea and the world, and stressed that unification would happen when the process of it is guided by Headwing Thought, as taught by the founders.

Dr. Jin expounded that the theory of heavenly peace and unification is anchored on the true liberation of heart and conscience and that only through Godism can we encompass the free society of Korea and the Juche society of the North.

The panel presentations followed with Dr. Lauren Richardson, a professor at Australian National University, reflecting on the pros and cons of the two main diplomatic approaches that have been used in the past two decades to restoring peace on the Korean Peninsula. She concluded by saying that only when regional stakeholders in the peace process refrain from pushing their own bilateral agenda and take South Korea's lead would the attempts at achieving peace with the North be successful and viable.



Prof. Bo Zhiyue, founder and president of the Bo Zhiyue China Institute, in his presentation, tackled three different scenarios that can lead to the eventual peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula: i) denuclearization followed by unification, ii) unification followed by denuclearization, and iii) simultaneous unification and denuclearization. He especially favors the third scenario as it is more doable. Prof. Zhiyue said that it is critical that the regional players be convinced of the benefits of the peaceful unification of the two Koreas and be willing to work together toward this noble goal.

Prof. Dr. S. P. Singh, vice-chancellor of the Assam Royal Global University in India, spoke about how he connected with UPF and his experience meeting with the founders. He continued, highlighting the vital role of UPF in easing the ever-growing tensions between the two Koreas. He underlined the importance of unity and keeping peace within oneself in order to achieve peace within the nation and in the world. He recited the famous quote from Bahá'u'lláh, saying, "So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth."

Dr. Geetha Govindasamy, senior lecturer in the Department of East Asian Studies of the University of Malaya in Malaysia, emphasized the role the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) can play in keeping North Korea at the negotiating table. She mentioned that ASEAN's role in inter-Korean peace and security issues must be explored to its fullest now more than ever. Dr. Govindasamy contended that if North Korea's participation in ASEAN grows, the state will, more likely than not, be able to take advantage of newer opportunities that may lead it to concentrate more on economic development rather than building its nuclear capabilities further.

Dr. Saifullo Safarov, chairman of the National Association of Political Scientists and the chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Relations of Tajikistan, said that the Korean problem is not an internal problem of two states, but an international problem of a geopolitical nature. For it to be solved urgently for the benefit of the Korean people, conditions must be created, and new political, diplomatic, civilizational, cultural and historical approaches are needed.

Dr. Chaiyong Satjipanon, former ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United States and Republic of Korea, spoke about the perpetual challenges on the road toward Korean reunification and how it should be viewed as a long-term pathway and part of a larger goal of international peace, security and stability. He said that reunification would require enormous development of the North and will need strong collaborations with the regional and international communities. Thailand and ASEAN can play meaningful roles in this respect, he added.

A short QandA session followed, facilitated by Dr. Joseph Refugio, president of the Philippine Council of Deans and Educators in Business.

To conclude the event, Prof. Dr. M. Shamsher Ali, chairman of IAAP-Asia Pacific and founding vice chancellor and professor emeritus of Southeast University in Bangladesh, summarized the points discussed by all the speakers and gave his final closing remarks. He noted that mankind is one and if we follow that principle, the two Koreas which share the same kinship, food, ethnicity, culture and language, have to ultimately be united. Once they unite together, can they bring mutual prosperity, interdependence and universally shared values and these new norms will be of benefit to civilization at large and contribute to building a culture of peace for the world.