

UPF Asia Pacific's Think Tank 2022 Forum Asia Pacific, Feb. 1: Opening Session

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Asia Pacific -- The opening session of the virtual *Think Tank 2022* Forum for UPF's Asia Pacific region was hosted by the International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP) and the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) on February 1, 2022 and addressed the "Role of Governments and Track II Diplomacy in Nation building and Peace."

A total of 1,977 people registered for the event. Three-hundred and seventy-five (375) participants watched it live on Zoom, while it was viewed thousands of times on YouTube, Facebook and other social media platforms.

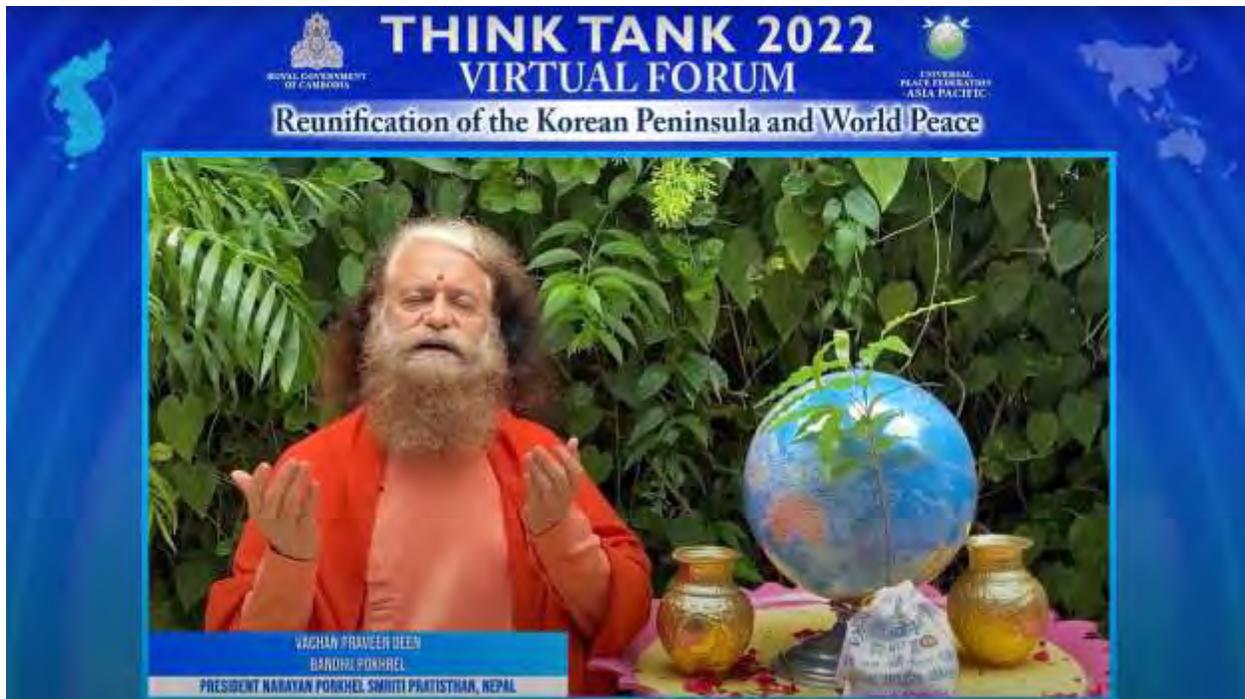


The moderator and emcee of the event, **Rev. Gregory Stone**, *deputy secretary general of UPF-Asia Pacific*, warmly welcomed all the participants and explained that the *Think Tank 2022* Forums are being held regionally in advance of the World Summit 2022, whose theme is "Reunification of Korean Peninsula and World Peace" and will convene from February 11 to 13 in Korea and virtually, with speakers sharing their perspectives and offering recommendations for a path forward towards reconciliation and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Then, four faith leaders representing Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism offered prayers.

The opening remarks were given by **Mr. Demian Dunkley**, *president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU)-Asia Pacific I*. Mr. Dunkley stated that a unique and remarkable characteristic of UPF founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon is their unwavering love for God. They were willing to go through suffering to stand up for Heaven's will. He went on to say that Mrs. Moon's autobiography "Mother of Peace" testifies to this and that from a young age she was

determined to absorb the problems of humanity and to do everything in her power to bring about a world of peace.



Mr. Dunkley read a stirring excerpt from "Mother of Peace" in which Mrs. Moon describes the hundreds kilometers-long trek by foot she made with great trepidation with her mother and grandmother from her home village of Anju in North Korea across the 38th parallel, braving extreme weather conditions, when she was just five years old.

This happened soon after World War II when Korea was divided into North and South. Many people died and many families were torn apart because of that divide. Mrs. Moon knew that the divide was symbolic of the separation between humanity and God, our Creator, our Heavenly Parent.

So, from a young age, Rev. and Mrs. Moon made it their mission to bring about a heavenly unified Korea and heavenly unified world.



Following a congratulatory song, Rev. Stone noted the expanding activities of UPF and commented that the reunification of the Korean Peninsula is a lynchpin to global peace.

The chairman's remarks were given by **Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal**, *chair of UPF-Asia Pacific and a former minister of government of Nepal*. He began by recognizing the speakers and then spoke about the events that led to the division of the Korean Peninsula. He noted that the Korean War began in 1950 and concluded in 1953 without a peace treaty but instead an armistice, leaving the peninsula divided despite being populated by people with a common history, culture and language. In 1991, Rev. and Mrs. Moon met with the late North Korean President Kim Il-sung in North Korea, he highlighted.

He explained that UPF has been active in promoting the peaceful reunification of the peninsula and that regional *Think Tank 2022* Forums are being organized over three days from February 1 to 3 in support of that. UPF-Asia Pacific's forum will feature eight sessions centering on each of UPF's associations and 50

speakers, and over 3,000 people from 33 countries registered for it, he further said.

UPF is also preparing for the World Summit 2022 in spite of various challenges related to the pandemic. All 157 governments that have diplomatic relations with South and North Korea have been invited to attend the event, and many have given very encouraging responses and are happy to participate.

Hon. Dhakal concluded by extending an invitation to everyone to participate in the Summit and expressed his confidence that we all can contribute to Korean reunification.



Hon. Ganesh Prasad Timilsima, *chairman of the National Assembly of Nepal*, expressed his belief that Korean reunification will not only open the path to world peace, but also enhance mutual prosperity of the human race by promoting interdependency and universal values. It will also strengthen economic, cultural and educational development. The Korean people themselves are integral to solving the problem of the two Koreas given their common geography and also their social, cultural and religious heritage. However, dialogue with neighbors in the region can play an important role, and without their involvement, reunification may be impossible. Correspondingly, the process of reunification is important to all of Northeast Asia and it is our common job to promote peace and stability in the region, Hon. Timilsima noted. Interdependency of the world system is required to fulfil the important task of reconciliation and international cooperation and dialogue will ensure the solidarity and common future of all peoples of the world.

Mdm. Adi Koila Nailatikau, *first lady of Fiji (2009-2015)*, said she was honored to join the event from her island home of Fiji. In preparing for it, she reflected on all the UPF World Summits and conferences she attended since 2013. The unification of the Korean Peninsula has been at the forefront of the agenda of these meetings every year. From her experiences and feelings, she has felt the growing strength, faith and belief of everyone participating in these convenings that unification is possible in our lifetimes. Rev. and Mrs. Moon understood that at the heart of Korea is a spiritual heritage as well as a common culture, tradition, language and one people. It is such a beautiful sentiment, and it is what the foundation of reunification will be -- a reminder of what once was and what can be.

She shared how the land and oceans are essential to everyday lives in the Pacific Island nations; they also teach about harmony and unity. Similarly, "for Korea, you only need to look back at what nature intended from the beginning, the very ground you walk on is part of one peninsula gifted to all Korean people." It is people who create divisions, but the land and the seas are the first to remind us of what we share together and have in common, she said.

A key challenge for the peninsula is how to allow the many different voices to come together in harmony. Rev. and Mrs. Moon knew and practiced their belief that unification would happen peacefully for all Korean people, and in setting up peace zones and fostering soft power diplomacy, though a long and patient process, they have successfully advanced peace and interaction between North and South Korea. They understood that peace is a process that will not come simply, but will take years of consistent nurturing and love, which is what they envisioned 30 years ago.

Mdm. Nailatikau also emphasized that the reunification process should be Korean-led, while other countries and the international community should support it and have a role to play. She also noted that the Asian continent has a rich culture with religions that have shared values.

The former first lady concluded by commenting on the pandemic and recent volcanic eruption in Tonga, both of which have had far-reaching consequences. These occurrences "remind us that we share the same atmosphere, that we are all human at the end of the day. Looking past our ambitions, our power struggles,

we know what is important; it is that we have our needs and vulnerabilities, and it is each other and our environment that we must respect and depend on to survive. May we strive to remember that as we move forward together in our peace processes and in supporting a united Korean Peninsula."



A keynote address was given by **Dr. Thomas G. Walsh**, *chair of UPF International*. He commented on the "marvelous" *Think Tank 2022* Forums and great work of UPF teams in each region to prepare for it. He commended the efforts of the *Think Tank 2022* Secretariat in Phnom Penh, which is collaborating with the Cambodian government to prepare for the World Summit 2022, and for all the efforts that have been made and are being made in the region. He acknowledged that the messages that were presented during this session were filled with rich and powerful content and gave great insight into and perspective on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, which in some way is a representative case study of divisions that exist globally. The division of the peninsula following World War II was linked to how the United States and USSR saw the world at that time. So, as with the dividing up of Europe, the peninsula was divided, with North aligned with the USSR and the South with the U.S. -- and the consequences were devastating. These polarized positions led to the Korean War that drew in the Pacific and Southeast Asian regions, including Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and other nations. The ongoing division of Korea is a thorny and protracted conflict. UPF is trying to bring about some thaw in relations between both countries, and a breakthrough for reconciliation is our determination, he remarked.

Rev. and Mrs. Moon, who are from North Korea and perceptibly seen there as "enemies of the State," visited the country in 1991 and persisted in a constructive approach applying their principle of "living for the sake of others." They invested many millions of dollars in North Korea to try to promote economic development, tourism and artistic exchange.

Since Rev. Moon's passing in 2012, Mrs. Moon has continued with a special sense of passion and urgency to promote the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Following up on the spectacular World Summit in 2020, UPF has been focusing its work on making a breakthrough for peace. It is trying to work with the 157 nations that have diplomatic relations with both North and South Korea and promote reconciliation not only between those two countries, but also between the U.S., China and Russia.

We are living at a time of tremendous tension and volatility -- of stock markets, with the global pandemic and in geopolitical relations. Another Cold War could transpire, but with potential for devastation should a move (such as a weapon launched) accidentally spiral out of control. So, this effort for the peninsula applies globally.

UPF is doing everything it can and has made a dramatic impact globally and will continue this coming year to broker peace with relentless effort, Dr. Walsh said in conclusion.