

Launch of THINK TANK 2022: In the Quest for Peace

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Chairman of Think Tank 2022 and past UN Secretary General



Your Excellencies, Distinguished Leaders from around the World, Peace-Loving Leaders and Citizens!

It is my distinct honor and privilege to participate in today's very important Rally of Hope for the Launch of Think Tank 2022 and the Firm Establishment of a Heavenly Unified Korea. Two thousand, twenty-two eminent high officeholders from around the world in the areas of politics, religion, the economy, security, culture, sports, media, academia and so on will discuss issues related to the Korean Peninsula and going beyond peace on the Korean Peninsula will launch Think Tank 2022 to support the realization of a heavenly unified Korea. As a Korean citizen, I would

like to express my profound gratitude.

I applaud Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for hosting today's rally. In February of last year, Dr. Moon successfully hosted World Summit 2020 and launched the digital-based online Rally of Hope series, as a response to the Covid pandemic. Furthermore, thanks to Dr. Moon's selfless efforts to realize lasting world peace and peaceful reunification on the Korean Peninsula, today's Rally of Hope for the Launch of Think Tank 2022 and the Firm Establishment of a Heavenly Unified Korea is possible. Once again, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Moon.

It was my honor to have participated in the first in the series. Over the past eight months, the Rally of Hope has made a dramatic impact, reaching millions of viewers around the world and offering a message of hope and a vision of peace grounded in the principles of interdependence, mutual prosperity and the universality of core human values.

Today's Rally of Hope is especially significant in that it has as its focus a topic near and dear to the hearts of all Koreans, namely the establishment of a durable and mutually beneficial peace on the peninsula. Moreover, today's program will also include an invitation to our global audience to lend their support to the call for the establishment of a global alliance of experts from all relevant fields of endeavor, united in their commitment to forging a path to peace on the Korean Peninsula. This multi-stakeholder alliance will consist of a diverse set of expert working groups in areas such as multilateralism and international relations; inter-parliamentarian engagement; business and economic development; track-II diplomacy; humanitarian activism; arts and cultural exchanges; academic, evidence-based research; youth engagement; media and environmentalism. This network will form an international alliance or coalition, a virtual think tank. And since our goal is to make an impact over the course of the next eighteen months, this initiative is named Think Tank 2022.

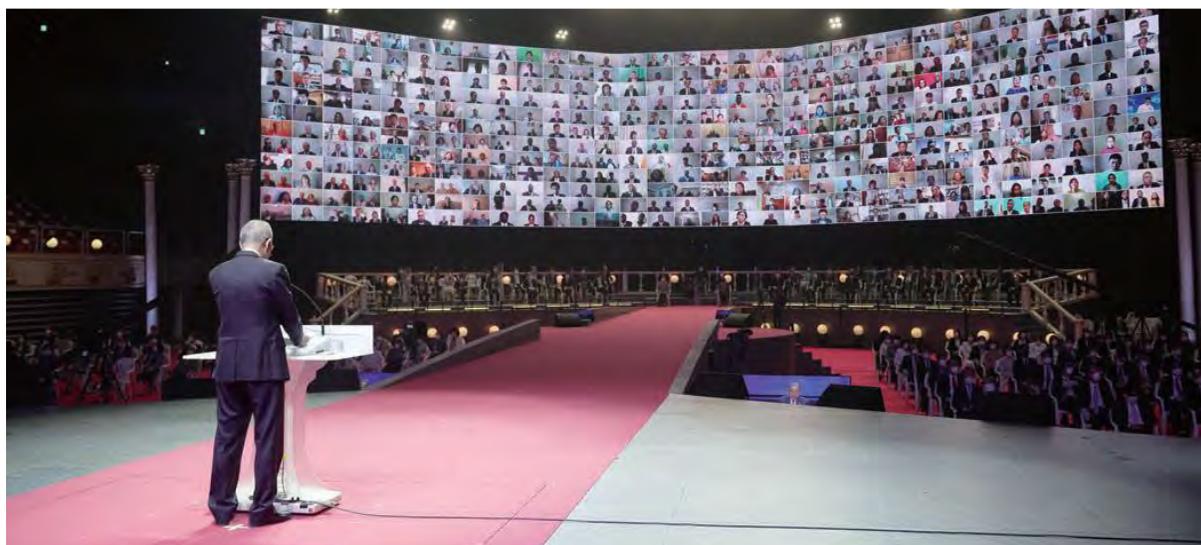
Complex modern challenges

There is no question that the time is ripe for such an initiative. Indeed, our world is facing unprecedented challenges, and the challenges on the Korean Peninsula are part of a wider, interconnected set of challenges that impact the entire planet. In other words, traditional geopolitical crises have risen to a new level of complexity owing to factors such as the advances in communications technology, the devastating capacities of new weapons technologies, satellite and cyber competition, the interdependence of the global economy, the density of urban populations, and of course, climate change.

Given these factors, we observe rising tensions around the world, such as among the primary military superpowers -- the USA, China and Russia. Even at this time, we witness serious potential for confrontation on the border of Russia and Ukraine, or even in the South China Sea. Also in this same stage of history, we are facing climate change, along with a whole range of human security crises. We are living at a time that brings with it the potential for peace, or the potential for a perfect storm of devastation, that is, if we cannot find the path to mutual respect and cooperation for the sake of a better future.

As secretary general of the United Nations, I did my very best to raise awareness of the threat of climate change. One of my proudest achievements during that time was the successful convening of the Conference of the Parties 21, which resulted in the Paris Climate Agreement, aimed at reducing pollution so that the rise in global temperatures would be less than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial averages. It is a virtual miracle that 196 parties signed the agreement in Paris in December 2015. The agreement included pledges from individual countries to reduce or limit harmful emissions and to lend support to developing countries. The Paris Agreement is a landmark accomplishment, a testament

to the significance of multilateral cooperation among government stakeholders. At the same time, it demonstrates the significance of our global civil society, for without the engagement of thousands of committed NGOs, including various faith-based organizations, this initiative would not have been successful.



Steps in the right direction

Based on my experience, I have found that when a broad coalition of governments, civil society actors, representatives of the private sector and other stakeholders share a common purpose and objective that goes beyond national self-interest and ideology, bringing about substantial and positive change on a global level is possible. Of course, it takes vision, leadership and often years of consistent hard work. But, most importantly, it can be done.

In this respect, I applaud the efforts of the Universal Peace Federation, Dr. Moon and the thousands of experts who have endorsed the proposal to establish Think Tank 2022 with the goal of achieving lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. Of course, this is not simple task. The roots of the conflict between the two Koreas are deep and tangled, with the immense weight of history bearing down upon them. There are no simple solutions, no magic wands.

However, we have witnessed geopolitical breakthroughs in the past, including reconciliation between divided peoples, evidenced in the reunion of East and West Germany, North and South Vietnam; in each instance, these were countries divided by the geopolitics of the cold war. These examples of course are unique and not entirely relevant to the Korean Peninsula, which has its own history and characteristics. As such, whatever resolution may be achieved on the Korean Peninsula will have its own unique features and must surely involve the will of the Korean people, of both Koreas. Moreover, it will not take place in isolation. As we know powerful stakeholders have interests in both the process and the outcome of any major development on this peninsula.

Nevertheless, today we are invited to take a step in the right direction. Even as a civil society initiative, we can awaken the imagination of other stakeholders; we can generate movement in the right direction, modestly, yet resolutely.

Once again, in closing I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and the Universal Peace Federation for taking this first step. I have no doubt that it will bear good fruit, especially if we all lend a hand and work together.