

## Yeon Ah (Choi) Moon and Julia Hoon Sook Moon represent Hak Ja Han at the Asia Pacific First Ladies Summit Convened in Koror, Palau

Shang Seon Park  
December 11, 2019



Koror, Palau -- The Asia Pacific First Ladies Summit 2019 -- Palau successfully concluded a series of three high-profile events, held between December 9 and 11, 2019, in Koror, Palau. Each of the three events -- the summit, the Interfaith Family Festival, and the International Youth Assembly -- was unprecedented and uniquely successful.

The summit on December 10 had the theme, "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values." Five current first ladies (Palau, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Mariana Islands) along with three former first ladies (Fiji, Kiribati and Marshall Islands) attended. In addition, more than 500 delegates from 38 nations were at the Ngarachamayong Cultural Center for the summit.



During the inaugural session, the International Association of First Ladies for Peace was launched. Although first ladies (and first gentlemen) do not have legal positions in government, they nonetheless have tremendous power and influence. Not only because of their relationship with their spouse, but equally important because of their connection to the grassroots of society. They interact more easily and freely with people, and thus, feel the pulse of the nation on political and cultural issues.

In the afternoon there were two sessions: "The Role of Women Leaders in Addressing the Critical Challenges: Solutions and Best Practices," which was followed by "Palau: Preserving the Environment through Cultural Wisdom."

The next morning, on December 11, in the same venue as the inaugural session, the Interfaith Family

Festival was held. Couples from various religious traditions rededicated their marriages, and at the end of the event, two young students pledged to be filial children by honoring their parents. On stage was the presidential couple, the President of Palau H.E. Tommy Remengesau, and First Lady Debbie Remengesau, along with other first ladies and international dignitaries.



In the afternoon, Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) held an International Youth Assembly. Additional chairs had to be brought into the hall for the 680 students from 14 public and private educational institutions, representing nearly 30 percent of all the students in Palau, participating in one of the largest intra-school assemblies ever held in the history of the island republic. The Ministry of Education supported the event during which students took the Pledge of Filial Piety.

The following summarizes the main sessions of the First Ladies Summit. To read a more detailed account, [click here](#).

### **Welcome Banquet**

The welcome banquet, hosted by the Office of the President, took place on December 9 at a venue by the beach overlooking the pristine seas of and with views of the breathtaking sunset in Palau, and was for the international delegates participating in the summit. A short program, organized by the First Lady of Palau, was followed by a buffet dinner and light entertainment.

### **Inaugural Session**

The opening plenary, which was the keynote session of the summit, was held on December 10, under the theme, "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values." Speakers included first ladies, eminent women leaders from around the world as well as a representative of UPF co-founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. A resolution to launch the International Association of First Ladies for Peace was [presented and signed](#).

### **Sessions II and III**

In the afternoon, two plenary sessions were held. During the second session, distinguished women leaders from government and civil society offered their ideas related to the session theme, "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Women Leaders: Solutions and Best Practices." The session showcased the positive impact of cooperation between government and civil society through the network of first ladies and women leaders to bring about development, prosperity and solutions to critical social and moral concerns.

During the third session, "Palau: Preserving the Environment through Cultural Wisdom," distinguished local leaders discussed Palauan programs and projects that have helped mitigate climate change by increasing awareness of and concern about the environment, such as the Palau Pledge. It was emphasized that teaching social responsibility to the next generation as well as promoting the preservation of the world's natural resources is vital for the well-being and future of our human family.

On December 11, four events were held: the Interfaith Family Festival, First Ladies Special Meeting, International Youth Assembly, and WFWPI Interactive Session.

### **Interfaith Family Festival**

The Interfaith Family Festival was designed to help raise healthy families as the foundation for building a

harmonious society and prosperous nation. It featured a marriage and family rededication ceremony and the conferral of the Leadership and Good Governance Award to the President of Palau H.E. Tommy Remengesau.



### **First Ladies Special Meeting**

The meeting, hosted by the First Lady of Palau, whose theme was the "The Palau Pledge Tour," was a boat trip for first ladies and a select number of distinguished guests introducing the beauty and fragility of Palau's natural environment and ancient culture. Taking place in Palau's stunning Southern Lagoon, a UNESCO World Heritage site designated for both its natural beauty and unique culture, the trip allowed guests to interact with Palau's magnificent marine environment and soak up its incredible scenery. Guests also heard from scientists, experts and the next generation about the importance and urgency of protecting Palau and all Pacific Island nations in the face of the many unique threats facing the region. The excursion culminated with a lunch at one of Palau's pristine beaches where guests were treated to the warm hospitality of Palau's matriarchal culture.

### **International Youth Assembly**

The International Youth Assembly was designed to empower youth to commit to practicing healthy lifestyles, by encouraging them to build good and lasting relationships and living more for others than themselves. It enlightened the youth regarding their essential roles in peace- and nation-building. They made a pledge of filial piety as the best way to prepare for their roles as faithful spouses and loving parents. There were cultural performances and a public speaking competition called S!NERGY.

About two months prior to the Youth Assembly, international students from the Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) along with local students organized a number of programs in schools and communities in Palau, including: character education and drug prevention programs, community service projects, martial arts training, public speaking instruction and intra-school competition, selection and training of liaison officers, offering scholarships, and a two-day youth camp on Coco Beach in the northern part of the island.

### **WFWPI Special Interactive Session**

The session showcased the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP)'s best practices in the field of education, humanitarian service outreach and peace-building initiatives in the Asia Pacific region.

The First Lady and the Office of the President of the Republic of Palau jointly co-hosted the Asia Pacific First Ladies Summit with UPF, and WFWP. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon co-founded UPF and WFWP, along with her late husband, the Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon. Mother Moon, as she is lovingly called, was unable to attend the Palau event because of her schedule in Africa. Instead, she sent her two daughters-in-law, Prof. Yeon Ah Moon and Dr. Julia Moon on her behalf.

To read the Palau Declaration, [please click here](#).

To read the Press Release of this event, [click here](#).