

UPF Korea Hosts 42nd Peace Forum at the Hyo Jeong Cultural Center in Seorak

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Seorak, South Korea -- The 42nd Peace Forum, hosted by UPF-Korea, was held at the Hyo Jeong Cultural Center in Seorak, a city 30 miles east of Seoul, in Korea on March 17, 2023. Launched in August 2021, these forums have become an important medium for exchange to raise awareness of the vision of a heavenly unified Korea under one God. They explore in-depth issues related to and are emerging as a public discussion space where experts from different fields address various topics to propose solutions for the reunification of Korea.



In his welcoming message, UPF director-general, Dr. Yoon Young-ho, said: "I would like to extend a warm welcome to all those who have come to participate in this special edition in the third series of the Peace Forums for a Heavenly Unified Korea. I also extend a warm welcome to all peace-loving leaders participating virtually in this event, whom I have not seen for three months. I pray that Ambassador Kim Sook will enlighten us today with his wisdom as he speaks of a beautiful heavenly unified Korea. I again extend a sincere welcome to you all. "

The forum featured a special lecture by Amb. Kim, a former ambassador of Korea to the UN, who spoke on, "Peace and Security: Our Diplomatic Mission." Amb. Kim referred to the war between Ukraine and Russia to illustrate that invasive wars for the appropriation of territory are still possible in the 21st century despite the existence of international law and the fact that the UN was established in the 20th century after the Second World War to maintain international peace and security.

He went on to highlight the emergence of dictatorships claiming to be non-liberal democracies within the liberal democratic system. Amb. Kim also spoke about the intensification of value conflicts in the world and stressed the importance of alliances to ensure national security. He then shared his views on the direction of Korea's diplomatic strategy, including his concerns for the future.



"This year marks the 70th anniversary of the armistice agreement and the ROK-U.S. alliance. The alliance started as a military cooperation and gradually evolved into an alliance of values, an equal-value alliance and a global alliance, and I think we should all make efforts in this direction. As we celebrate its 70th anniversary, we should have a vision that will guide us for the next 30 years until the celebration of the centenary of the alliance. The division [of the Korean Peninsula] has existed for over 75 years, and we need to take this into account in the vision for the centenary of the alliance. What steps should we take, then, to ensure that this division does not go beyond 100 years? I think we should have a specific vision and strategy for the reunification of Korea. I therefore wish that all our citizens have a vision for and a critical mind about this. I am very grateful to you for attentively listening to my many observations during this meaningful [forum]."

After a wonderful performance by Kwon Song Gyung, the floor opened for sharing reflections. The panel consisted of Amb. Kim; Mr. Cho Young Kook, secretary general of the Think Tank 2022 Center for Policy Studies, who chaired the panel; and two policy scholars, Dr. Cha Tu Young and Dr. Moon Byon Cho, who made general remarks.

This was followed by a QandA session with on-site and online participants, and afterwards, lively discussions on Korea's diplomatic strategy and peace in Northeast Asia.

The event concluded with Amb. Kim stressing the need to preserve our beliefs and values in spite of circumstances and to continue with wide open hearts and minds.

The third series of the Peace Forums is being held in a new format with face-to-face interviews, discussion programs and various forums for exchange. The forums will continue from April 7 of this year and are scheduled to be held in different locations every Friday of each week.

