

## UPF International - Peace Summit 2023: Opening Plenary

Yvo Bruffaerts  
May 3, 2023



**Seoul, South Korea** -- The Peace Summit 2023 on the theme of "Contemporary Challenges to Global Order: Toward a World Culture of Peace" convened on May 2-6 in Seoul, Korea.

The opening plenary of Peace Summit 2023, an international conference gathering former heads of state and leading political as well as religious leaders from around the world, was held in Seoul on May 3, 2023. The event started with a wonderful performance by The Little Angels.

An **Interfaith Water Ceremony** was conducted by six prominent religious leaders.

Welcoming address:

**Dr. Thomas Walsh**, *Peace Summit 2023 Organizing Committee Co-Chair*

Dr. Walsh noted that both UPF co-founder Reverend Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon at the UN Millennium General Assembly in August 2000, shared their vision about a renewed United Nations, which would have political and religious leaders working together. Since then, it has become clear that interreligious peace is essential to achieve lasting world peace.



UPF has emerged as a highly respected international and interreligious NGO that works across all sectors of society, to build networks not only among current and former heads of state and parliamentarians, but also among religious leaders, leaders in the business sector, the media, academia, the arts and culture.

Underlying this work is a recognition that peace has to be approached comprehensively and holistically.

Dr. Walsh concluded by saying that there are increasing threats to peace emerging around the world, which underscores the importance of UPF and Peace Summit 2023. He therefore invited cooperation for the sake of our children and future generations.



Opening address:

**Dr. Yun Young-ho**, *Peace Summit 2023 Organizing Committee Co-Chair*

Dr. Yun said that rather than seeing a world of lasting peace based on values of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values, the fight for hegemony around the world is increasing. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon offers the fundamental solution to the realization of permanent peace, with the vision of one human family, with God as the Heavenly Parent. By working according to His values, a heavenly unified Korea and unified world can be realized.

Dr. Yun gave an overview of the various associations under the UPF umbrella, as well as the world summits held or planned in various continents. Much attention has gone to Africa, a continent with a young population and abundant resources. In Asia, where fierce competition for supremacy is taking place among the great powers, continental projects are also being carried out.

The realization of a world of permanent peace is impeded due to national patriotism and egoism. With human-centered wisdom only, a major and much needed shift in values is impossible. Now is the time for all to unite and to create a "divine unified world" in which coexistence, co-prosperity and public justice are realized through continental solidarity beyond national boundaries. Dr. Yun expressed his hope that Peace Summit 2023 may become the starting point for continental solidarity for a divinely unified world.

A video was shown featuring congratulatory messages by the President of Senegal, H.E. Macky Sall, Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, and Former US President Donald Trump.

The following congratulatory addresses were given by persons present at the Summit:

**Hon. Newt Gingrich**, *Speaker, House of Representatives (1995-1999), USA*

Mr. Gingrich noted that this year marks the 70th anniversary of the Korean-American alliance to defend freedom and safety on the Korean peninsula. However, the process of bringing North Korea into a family of freedom and peace may still take several decades. We shouldn't give up hope, seeing the progress South Korea has made since 1950.

About the assault on religious liberty in Japan, and in particular on the Unification Church, he said: "We are watching a process that frankly amazes me, in which a 40-year campaign by the Communist Party of Japan against the church, a campaign by lawyers to get rich at the expense of the church, and now a news media that has aligned itself with the hard left, are all leading to the potential of the Prime Minister literally violating the constitution of Japan. [...] America, as you know, is very far from being perfect, and we remind ourselves of this every morning, as we argue loudly among ourselves. But you can be of any religious background in America and win an elected office. You can be of any religious background in America and be appointed to be a judge. You have an opportunity to advance in a way that respects



your right to approach God. And my only hope [...] is that here I can appeal to the Japanese government to decide that protecting religious liberty and protecting the rights of individuals is central to our future."

**Hon. Ajith Nishantha Rajapakse**, *Deputy Speaker, Parliament, Sri Lanka*

Mr. Rajapakse said that the government of Sri Lanka has a Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, as it is aware of the importance of being a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious nation. While Buddhism is embraced as the main religion of Sri Lanka, various minority cultures are not only tolerated but also welcomed. The Sri Lankan government therefore has extended its solidarity for UPF's Asia Pacific Union which was created at the suggestion and according to the vision of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. It is believed this project will pave the way for advancing the common cultural values of Asia, i.e., altruism, filial piety, marital fidelity, and a global mindset to protect Planet Earth.



Keynote addresses:

**H.E. Brigi Rafini**, *Prime Minister of Niger (2011-2022), CEN-SAD Secretary General*

Mr. Rafini remarked that the theme of Peace Summit 2023, "Contemporary Challenges to Global Order, Towards a Global Culture of Peace" was particularly well chosen at a time when many conflicts are shaking the world and endangering social cohesion, stability and peace. In this context, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) has developed the Regional Youth Program in close contact with governmental and non-governmental actors from the 25 member countries. The program aims at mobilizing youth for the improvement of social, economic and environmental conditions, centered on the principles of Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values advocated by UPF and its associations. The Regional Youth Program is based on three pillars: First, citizenship education, also called education for good character and peace, which aims at developing a sense of virtues and universal values. The two other pillars, i.e., green entrepreneurship and sustainable land management, aim at creating decent job opportunities for young people, proper living conditions and restoring ecological balances. Mr. Rafini expressed his gratitude to UPF for the invaluable technical and financial support provided to the program.

**H.E. Yves Leterme**, *Prime Minister (2008, 2009-201), Belgium*

Mr. Leterme reminded us of the free trade agreement (FTA) signed between the European Union and South Korea in 2010, one of the most important agreements ever concluded by the union. It resulted in a more than 80% increase in international trade between the EU and the Republic of Korea. He believes that, in addition to political dialogue and the all-important interfaith dialogue, there is a need for more free trade and economic cooperation by enterprises on a level playing field. This, after all, brings openness and interconnectedness, and provides a good basis for sustainable peace.

The beginning of the new millennium saw a golden period of economic development. Since then, however, populism has increased, and the economy is often considered as a zero-sum game in which the advantage for one comes at the expense of the other. Moreover, there was COVID-19, which put a brake on economic cooperation and development. Mr. Leterme believes that beyond the all-important interfaith dialogue, mutual economic openness, common interests and interconnection are an excellent guarantee for peace.

**H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, President (2015-2019), Sri Lanka**

Mr. Sirisena said that many crises, conflicts and social unrest can be found in economically backward countries or regions. Therefore, creating a sustainable foundation of economic development is the best way to establish lasting peace. Studies have shown that communism, nationalism and monarchical authoritarianism in this past century, have failed to make the world a better place. Mr. Sirisena believes humanitarianism and the promotion of human welfare should be central to politics. He also mentioned the huge current economic crisis facing Sri Lanka. However, thanks to an agreement with the IMF and the policies of the current government, it looks like macroeconomic stability will gradually be restored.



**Hon. Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State (2018-2021), USA**

Mr. Pompeo said that the work of UPF is more important than ever to bring individuals together to work towards peace rather than conflict. He also mentioned *The Washington Times*, founded by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her late husband, Dr. Sun Myung Moon, which has been a tremendous force in the USA for religious freedom, as it understands the importance of faith to create peace and to promote family values across the world.

He added that during his recent meeting with President Zelenski, apart from talking politics, they also prayed together, with a central understanding that it is God who will bring peace to Ukraine. He said: "We must never lose sight of the peace objective, so that every human can live with the basic dignity that God created and imbued in each and every one of us." He reminded us of the signing of the Abraham accords. Arab nations previously hostile to Israel decided to move towards peace, based on a common set of understandings.

Mr. Pompeo concluded by saying: "We need to promote the love that Mother Moon knows, the faith that Mother Moon knows. Religious freedom is under assault in many places. We watch in our own country as believers are called extremists. Speaker Gingrich spoke to the fact that in Japan today, religion is under assault under the guise of a leftist ideology. We, those of us who are here today, can never forget the centrality of the belief to simply love your family, help your neighbours, work alongside those who believe in your faith and help those who have no faith see that only through Him can the peace and prosperity of the world ultimately be achieved."

**Mr. James Rogers, UPF Advisor**

Mr. Rogers, in his rather light-hearted speech, said that, remarkably, a few decades ago, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon started a peace movement in Korea at a time when the country was torn by a war that many now consider to have been senseless. It is certainly one of the most successful peace movements in the world today. If Martians landed on the Korean Peninsula, he said, they would not understand why people speaking the same language, eating the same rice with the same chopsticks, are trying to shoot each other. Eventually, he said, the DMZ, which is currently dividing the Korean Peninsula, will be opened and there will be a big party at the DMZ, largely thanks to the work and vision of UPF and its co-founders, Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. If peace is achieved in the Korean Peninsula, there will be peace throughout Asia and beyond.





### Founder's address: Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

Dr. Moon stated that even though humanity has yearned and worked to realize a world of lasting peace, human history is rife with conflict and war. God created our first ancestors in His image and gave a period of growth so that humanity could become fruitful. Unfortunately, the first ancestors fell. Throughout history religions have emerged trying to guide humanity along the path of virtue and morality. We can see many righteous people working tirelessly to fulfill their God-given mission. Yet, human beings alone cannot solve the world's problems. Heaven has been waiting for humanity to recognize that God, our Creator and Heavenly Parent, is the true owner of the Universe, and that He has been waiting for the advent of True Parents to guide humanity on the path of salvation. Also, the dream of Heavenly Parent is for humanity to meet the True Parents, to receive Heaven's Blessing and to live in the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.



The wish of humanity is being realized today. Many temples to God the Creator have been dedicated among many religions in search of the essence of the Creator. The dedication of the Cheon Won Gung temple is now about to happen.

Heaven's work to save humanity can also be seen in the testimony of the sacred religious texts. Heaven sent Jesus among the people of Israel. In Genesis we read that God created man and woman. Jesus came as the only begotten son but was unable to fulfill the full scope of his mission. Therefore, he prophesied his return. Christianity began 2000 years ago with a long wait for Christ's return.

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon called upon the audience to join their hands and hearts to solve the problems afflicting humanity today, not to rely on their own ideas but to unite with God the Creator.

In conclusion, Dr. Moon expressed her deep gratitude for the many words of congratulations received on her 80th birthday. She informed the audience that she wanted to make a donation of \$800,000 to a noble

cause for the sake of humanity. Dr. Moon wishes we may all realize that we live at a miraculous time, that we may receive Heaven's blessings and be proud of the new history of peace we are creating.



**The International Elders' Roundtable** was launched as a highlight of Summit 2023. This global project aims to capture the wisdom and experience of elders to create peace and stability in the society and nation. "Youngsters and adults have visions and enthusiasm, but seniors show a way through their experience and knowledge. Therefore, for there to be eternal peace and prosperity, there must be cooperation between seniors, middle-aged people and youth in our society," said **H.E. Maithripala Sirisena**, former President of Sri Lanka, who was present at planning meetings for the Elders Roundtable initiative.

Three Initiatives for regional cooperation were launched symbolically by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon: an Africa Summit, an Asia Pacific Union Secretariat, and a Sri Lanka IAPP and IAPD Asia Pacific HQ.

Dr. Hak Ja Han's 80th Birthday celebration concluded the opening session. Mother Moon cut a large birthday cake, and flowers and gifts were offered.

