

UPF Buenos Aires, Argentina shared experiences participating in the ILC in Korea

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Buenos Aires, Argentina -- Argentine parliamentarians and IAPP members Hon. Cecilia Britto and Hon. Humberto Benedetto shared their experiences participating in UPF's International Leadership Conference (ILC), which was held from February 18 to 22, 2018 in Korea, at a meeting organized by UPF-Argentina on April 5 at Bioy Casares Hall in Buenos Aires city.

Hon. Britto, a member of the Mercosur Parliament (Parlasur), who is from Misiones province, said: "The experience was so overwhelming and enlightening...I had never attended a conference like this [before]. There was such diversity (among the political, religious and tribal leaders who attended it), and I live in a province where diversity is in our nature. Meeting each other was a wonderful experience." She asked herself, "Maybe the peace we are seeking is within ourselves?"

Hon. Britto added, "We work in the field of politics, which shapes [society]. However, people do not always choose the road to peace. This is our challenge, and our commitment [should be to choose peace]. Whenever we have to make a decision, it is important to place dialogue and tolerance first." (2) Hon. Britto described other moments of the ILC, and thanked UPF for inviting her to it and, at the end, she shared a video she created (3).

Hon. Benedetto, an engineer and also a Mercosur parliamentarian, who is from Córdoba province, shared of his experience: "Despite our differences, we share the same values -- even with those who do not believe in God. We all believe in doing good to others, honoring life and growing together." He also said, "America remains a peaceful continent with its religious diversity."

This ILC was the second conference Hon. Benedetto attended in Korea, and he affirmed his "commitment to the interfaith movement." The conference included more leaders from different religions than political representatives. He said that he wants to share his positive experiences with his people. Furthermore, Hon. Benedetto was honored to receive a present from the Latin America director of South Korea's Foreign Affairs Ministry. "I will never forget this."

"God has started to grant us blessings," Hon. Benedetto said. He considered the positive aspects of foreign affairs, such as North Korea's agreement to denuclearize; the restoring of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and China; and Syria's humanitarian corridor. At the end, he thanked UPF, and shared an anecdote about a Muslim who had a mission in Italy, and stressed the current role of Pope Francis (4).

At the ILC, which was attended by 550 officials and experts from over 90 countries, several special events took place, including the launch of the nomination process for the 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize (5) and the 2018 Peace Road (6) and the founders' birthday celebration at CheongShim Peace World Center.

Videos introducing the Peace Road (7) and the 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize (8), established by UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, were shown at the meeting.

All the guests had the opportunity to ask the parliamentarians questions. The event concluded with a light meal, which was enjoyed by everyone.



Two organizations supported the meeting: the Permanent Forum on Education, Science and Culture for Peace (FOPAZ) and the University of the Merchant Marine (Universidad de la Marina Mercante, UdeMM).

(1) To read a report of and to view photos of the ILC 2018, please visit: www.upf.org/conferences-2/187-international-leadership-conferences/7860-spirit-of-optimism-evident-at-international-leadership-conference.

(2) Hon. Cecilia Britto's presentation can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5jqwBB5Kls.

(3) Hon. Britto's video can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgjfOEOg6a4

(4) Hon. Humberto Benedetto's presentation can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ig6QDIFkIU.

(5) The Sunhak Peace Prize, established by UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, honors individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to peace and human development. The Prize's motto is "Making the World Better for Future Generations." The first Prize was awarded in 2015 to the President of Kiribati, H.E. Anote Tong, for his efforts to raise global awareness of the effects of climate change, and Indian fisheries scientist Dr. Modadugu Gupta, for creating an aquaculture system for poor, rural populations.

The 2017 Sunhak Peace Prize focused on the refugee crisis, and was awarded to Italian surgeon Dr. Gino Strada and Dr. Sakena Yacoobi. Dr. Strada is the founder of Emergency, an international humanitarian NGO that provides emergency medical care in conflict areas. Dr. Yacoobi is the founder and CEO of the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), an NGO that has developed an innovative solution to the refugee settlement problem through education. Her efforts have contributed to improving the rights and social status of women and children in Islamic society. For more information about the Sunhak Peace Prize, please visit sunhakpeaceprize.org.

(6) The Peace Road is a global peace initiative that seeks to connect all peoples around the world. It promotes the peaceful resolution of conflicts, understanding between cultures and religions, and cooperation between nations. It also advocates the peaceful reunification of Korea, of the creation of a fifth UN headquarters in Asia, and the commitment of the international community to solve domestic and international conflicts. The initiative is based on the International Peace Highway (IPH), a transportation network proposed by Rev. and Mrs. Moon in 1981 as a way to implement world peace. The IPH would allow people to travel from the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, to Santiago, Chile in South America.

For more information on the Peace Road, please visit peaceroad.net.

(7) To view a video about the 2018 Peace Road, please visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5qqrzyPStI.

(8) To view a video about the Sunhak Peace Prize, please visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=bI3IIH7bbY4.