

ILC 2021 The Americas: The International Association of First Ladies for Peace

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The Americas - The International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), in partnership with the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), conducted Session Five of the ILC Americas on the topic "Women's Perspectives on Peace in the Pacific Rim." The session had 245 participants in attendance and 100 views on YouTube the following day. To see the video, [click here](#).

Our distinguished panel was composed of Hon. Mrs. Mignon Bowen-Phillips, wife of the current prime minister of Guyana, and two former First Ladies from Nicaragua and Paraguay, Hon. María Fernanda Flores de Alemán and Hon. Emilia Alfaro de Franco.



All presentations of the three First Ladies expressed their heart of concern and resonance for the divided nation of Korea, as they compared the divides and challenges with those in their own countries. The entire session was carried by a spirit of motherly love, warmth, honesty and sincerity. This generated many questions from the audience at the end, which the panelists responded to with passion and determination.

As one action step, the suggestion was made to send a delegation of women leaders to North Korea to speak with the North Korean government.

Also as a result of this session, H.E. Emilia de Franco felt the urgency to immediately follow up with an

action step after this gathering and is scheduling another meeting together with other First Ladies and women leaders in South America to continue the discussion on finding solutions for the unification of North and South Korea and also solutions to the most pressing issues in the region.

The success of conference was a result of prayers, sincere devotion and unity of our women leaders of the Americas, led by Mrs. Blessie Dhakal, Mrs. Lilly Tadin (Canada), Mrs. Gail Veith (Central America and the Caribbean) and Mrs. Roswitha Dueck de Giuliano (South America), as well as Secretary General Mrs. Kiyomi Schmidt.

It was also the result of the close and trusting collaboration with our UPF leaders of the Americas, Dr. Jenkins, Dr. Moonshik Kim, Dr. Famularo, Dr. C.S. Yang and Dr. Shin, as well as the many professional UPF members throughout the Americas.

Special thanks goes to President Hoon Sook Nim, who delivered a deep and profound message representing Dr Hak Ja Han Moon and the vision for women's leadership at this time, in support of the unification of North and South Korea. Her grace, warmth and heart truly inspired all!



Highlights of the IAFLP Session and reflection from participants:

Moderator Dr. Susan Taffer (Founder, World Connections Foundation) greeted everyone warmly and presented an introductory video of the founding of IAFLP. This was followed by heartfelt welcoming remarks by Angelika Selle (Chair, IAFLP-Americas; President, WFWP-USA. Mrs. Mrs. Selle set the tone for the focus on the Korean Peninsula and shared the founder's vision as to why women need to play a pivotal role in leading the way to peace at this time, together with men.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Julia Moon (President, WFWP International) described the world's recent history, headed by Atlantic Ocean nations maintaining power by masculine means of military strength and colonization. Dr. Moon then spoke on the current Pacific Rim era, with the Latin root of peace found in pacific. She confirmed that if we are able to learn from our mistakes and lean into a feminine, nurturing approach to peacemaking, a world of peace is within reach.

Distinguished panelist Hon. Mrs. Mignon E. Bowen-Phillips (wife of the current Prime Minister, Republic of Guyana) spoke of Guyana's recent history of conflict and mass violence pre-independence, stressing that her country could empathize with the challenges on the Korean Peninsula. Acknowledging the limited communication between the two conflicting states, she conveyed the importance of governments and global stakeholders working together in seeking solutions to humanitarian concerns.

Hon. Mdm. María Fernanda Flores de Alemán (First Lady, Republic of Nicaragua, 1997 - 2002) shared about the extreme political divide in Nicaragua caused by injustice and how this division has prevented economic and sociopolitical stability. To resolve such issues, she strongly emphasized the need for people to unite together for a worthy cause. She urged all leaders to set objectives not for material gain, but for the common good of the people.

Hon. Mdm. Emília Alfaro de Franco (First Lady, Republic of Paraguay, 2012 - 2013) shared Paraguay's experience in bringing together this divided country. Broad consensus came about through the initiation of a great person, who envisioned a unified future as opposed to power at the expense of the people. At

this time of Covid resulting in major setbacks for women the world over, Honorable Franco empowered all to raise their voices and gain visibility, to effect change on the major concerns of our time.

In her closing remarks, Roswitha Dueck de Giuliano (International Vice President, WFWP-Latin America) highlighted the takeaways from each of the presentations and appealed that the participants stay connected.

With the remaining time, Moderator Taffer opened the floor for questions from the audience, which sparked a most engaging and spirited discussion among panelists and representatives of IAFLP and WFWP. Several questions challenged the speakers as to next steps for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula and for IAFLP, and on how to implement the ideas shared during the program.

Panelists conveyed the importance of having the strong will to do what is needed to create change and to invest in their communities through education and instilling values. Ideas, including sending a delegation of women leaders to meet with the leadership in North Korea, were discussed. In terms of next steps for IAFLP, Mrs. Selle announced an upcoming First Ladies conference being planned in Washington, DC, in October 2022.

Dr. Taffer wrapped up the session warmly and on a high note, projecting real hope that peace is within reach.



Comments from participants:

This was a fantastic event where we could hear from distinguished women leaders how they are working to a peaceful world.

Thank-you to all the panelists. The world, especially women worldwide, is looking to your participation with much hope and united solutions towards the unification of Korea. May God bless you, your family and country. Thank-you for your leadership and the heart of a woman and grandmother for the world.

I'm sure with the support of the feminine perception, there will be so many changes in North Korea and in the world.

The unification of Korea will be an example of education to the value of every life in all countries. We bear life, and each life is precious to our Creator. Your education of Nicaragua and Paraguay is invaluable. We need to live for each other, even beyond countries.

I congratulate the great work that the WFWP-I and each region do for the contribution towards the unification of the Koreas.

Women have the power to lead toward a peaceful world. Wonderful event.

Thank you very much for sharing so much knowledge and projections. May we together, change for a better world.