

UPF Manila, Philippines The International Summit Council for Peace Summit

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July 9, 2020



Manila, Philippines -- The International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP) of UPF held its first "Virtual Summit" for the Asia Pacific region on July 9, 2020, featuring keynotes from eight current and former heads of state and government and five first ladies, from 10 nations. The conference, whose theme was, "Rebuilding and Renewing our Nations in the Post-Covid 19 World: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values," was supported by the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP).

A total of 9,001 people registered for the two-hour event, which took place on Zoom and was translated into six languages: Thai, Indonesian, Cambodian, Russian, Mongolian and Chinese. And, to date, over 938,000 viewers in 106 nations have watched the event via Facebook, YouTube, and satellite television.

The ISCP was established on February 8, 2019 at the UPF World Summit 2019 in Seoul, Korea. It is an international network of current and former heads of state and government who explore solutions and offer recommendations to address the world's critical problems.

During the virtual summit, leaders appreciated the work of UPF, guided by its co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon who has carried on the legacy of her late husband, Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Summit speakers acknowledged that UPF has provided a beacon of hope in this divided, struggling world.

Summary of Keynote Addresses:

Dr. Young-ho Yoon is the director general of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, an affiliated global organization with headquarters in Seoul, Korea. On behalf of Dr. Moon, the founder of the ISCP, Dr. Yoon expressed gratitude and respect to the distinguished speakers and delegates of the summit. In her address, Dr. Moon encouraged them to use their experiences and resources to discuss issues related to economic development, education, agricultural development, healthcare, and especially the promotion of marriage and family values, as a way of addressing the current critical challenges.

Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, chairman of UPF, focused on interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values, saying that these ideals are essential for us to be a global community. They are also part of every culture and religious tradition. He encouraged the panelists to use these values as guideposts, letting these values strike our hearts, minds and imaginations as we move forward to rebuild a better world.

Dr. Chung Sik Yong, regional group chairman of UPF-Asia Pacific, highlighted UPF's five Principles of Peace and the history of the three Asia Pacific Summits that were held over the past two years in Nepal, Cambodia and Palau. He then spoke on the theme of the summit, saying the lack of universal values was "more dangerous than the coronavirus." The virus spread so quickly and has caused so many deaths and so much destruction because nations have been seeing each other as foes rather than friends.

H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa, prime minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, noted that COVID-19 has stretched global public health systems beyond their limits and caused unprecedented economic, social and humanitarian damage. The Sri Lankan prime minister reiterated that the virus,

to 2011. He applauded UPF's initiative to convene this summit and emphasized that "no country alone is safe until the whole world [is] safe." The pandemic is a great teacher and lessons learned from it include that despite geographical boundaries, the world is closely connected. He underscored that initiatives based on mutual collaboration, interdependence and harmony need to be nurtured in order for mutual prosperity to be achieved for everyone.

H.E. Danny Philip, prime minister of the Solomon Islands from 2010 to 2011, began his address by friendly greeting the audience with, "Hello world." He said COVID-19 has not reached the islands but the country is preparing for it. He expressed his hope for a world without war, a world of shared resources, peace and harmony. His wish is that as a result of this crisis, world leaders develop a "global consciousness" so that peace and goodwill, rather than fear and conflict, can spread throughout the world.

H.E. Ati George Sokomanu was the founding president of the Republic of Vanuatu from 1984 to 1989. As birds chirped in the background where he was speaking, the former president said that this global crisis has showed us how vulnerable, interconnected and interdependent we all are. He emphasized this by saying that we are all in this together, because what affects one nation impacts all nations. We must work together, he underlined. At the end of his remarks, he thanked UPF and its founders, Rev. and Dr. Moon, and called for all of us to have the spirit of one family under God.

A refreshing intermission of musical performances followed. First, the Universal Peace Dove Dance was performed by the Asian Cultural Council of Cambodia. Afterwards, a vocal solo of "I Believe" was sung by Ms. Gerphil Geraldine Flores of the Philippines.

Mdm. Rachael Marape is the first lady of Independent State of Papua New Guinea. She began by saying that however diverse we are, we are global citizens having a common goal of peace and unity. She continued, highlighting that strong women leaders are needed to take responsibility to inspire and lead their people to a better future. This is the role of first ladies. At the end, she emphasized the importance, more than ever, of the need to foster strong, stable families for the sake of national unity, global solidarity and to reinforce spiritual values to help the world get through this global pandemic.

Mdm. Shiranthi Rajapaksa, the wife of the Hon. prime minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, pointed out that women have been hardest hit during the pandemic. This is because they are the frontrunners in caring for their families during the quarantine, serve as healthcare providers and take leadership roles in society. Therefore, women must also be the backbone of recovery efforts. Recognizing Dr. Moon's role in leadership, the first lady of Sri Lanka closed her address, saying that empowering women meant empowering families, communities and nations.

Mdm. Diann Mendiola Tudela Torres is the first lady of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The global crisis has reminded us that we all have a desire to live in a free, just and peaceful world. We all seek education for our children, healthcare for our families, public safety and social well-being. The key to bringing back our nations is economic recovery and jobs. She concluded by thanking UPF for playing such a critical global role in creating a network of peace builders.

Mdm. Adi Koila Mara Nailatikau was the first lady of the Republic of Fiji from 2009 to 2015. Quoting from the Bible, she reminded us of the importance of faith and hope, especially during uncertain times. Going back to "indigenous knowledge" meant reviving the spiritual harmony of our ancestors, renewing an interconnectedness with the environment, welcoming a resurgence of family ties, and acknowledging the needs of the greater community. She closed her message reminding us that we are one human family on one planet earth.

Hon. Mrs. Sujata Koirala served as the deputy prime minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal from 2009 to 2011. She is also the vice chair of the women's wing of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP). She started by thanking UPF for its humanitarian work worldwide. Women, she said, have played crucial roles in families and societies and are too often neglected. This crisis should be a reminder, she emphasized, that our world is vulnerable and fragile. She concluded by saying that only by being united with a shared love and compassion, regardless of gender, age, class, race or religion, can we rebuild our world.

Dr. Robert S. Kittel is the Asia Pacific coordinator for the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), an initiative of UPF, and the chairman of Youth and Students for Peace (YSP). He gave the closing remarks, acknowledging the sincere gratitude of UPF for each of the distinguished panelists and the international guests.

Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, minister for peace and reconstruction of the Government of Nepal from 2015 to 2016 and chair of UPF- and the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP)-Asia Pacific, served as the moderator of the event.