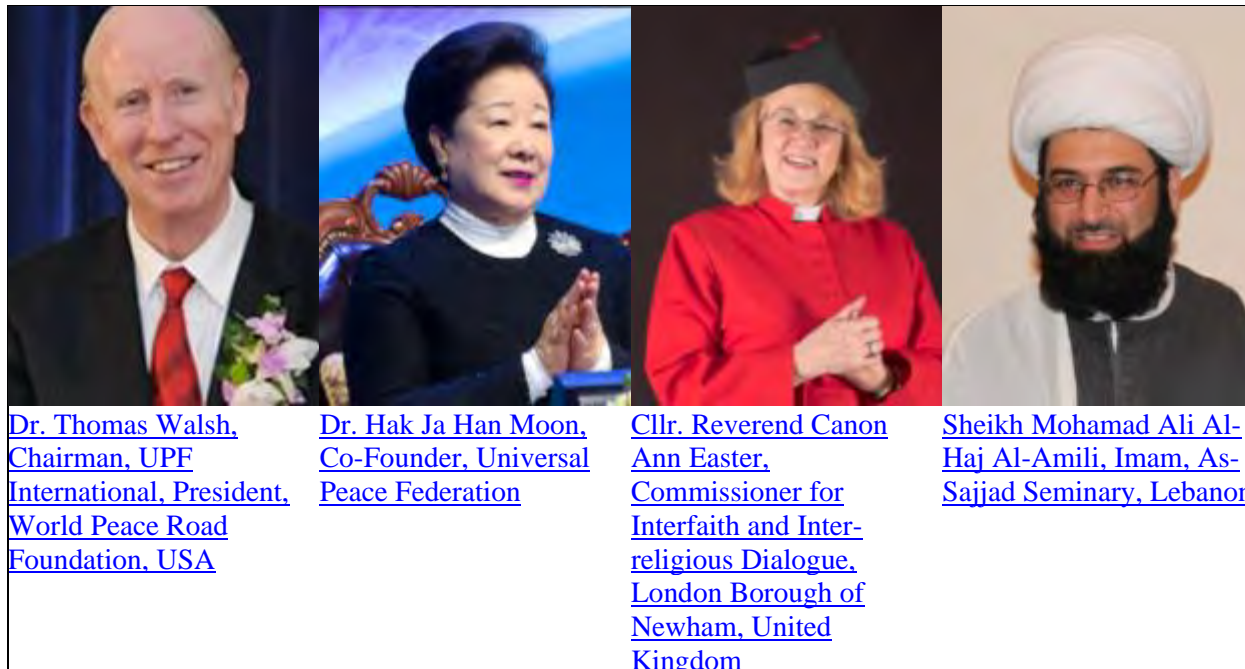


UPF Europe and the Middle East's ILC 2021 - Peaceful Reunification of Korea

Robin Marsh
April 29, 2021



Paris, France - UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's speech during the International Leadership Conference's Opening Session set the direction for the ILC's eight sessions.

UPF of Europe and the Middle East began its regional ILC2021 on April 29, 2021, with an opening plenary titled "Toward a Peaceful Reunification on the Korean Peninsula: Creating the Foundation for a Unified World."

Each of the eight online ILC sessions, held between April 26 and May 1, represented a different UPF association and focused on a different aspect of Korean reunification.

The Opening Session also drew attention to Think Tank 2022, a new initiative which will call upon experts from around the world to contribute to the reunification of North and South Korea.

The keynote speakers for the Opening Session were Italian Sen. Pier Ferdinando Casini and Swiss entrepreneur Dr. Claude Béglé.

Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, the chair of UPF International, and UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon sent recorded messages.

The invocations from Rev. Canon Ann Easter of the United Kingdom, the former chaplain to HRH Queen Elizabeth II, and Sheikh Mohamad Ali Al-Haj Al-Amili of Lebanon, the imam of the As-Sajjad Seminary, reflected the UPF approach that peace-making efforts must be rooted in godly values.



[Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, Chair, UPF Europe and Middle East](#)

Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, the regional co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, highlighted the motivation underlying the current International Leadership Conference webinars, which were being convened simultaneously on five continents. He explained that they were being held to commemorate the December 1991 visit to North Korea of UPF co-founders Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon, in which they sought to open a channel for dialogue between the North and South.

These webinars are also meant to lay a foundation for Think Tank 2022, as multiple expert working groups examine various issues pertaining to Korean reunification, for example, the role of Europe in promoting reconciliation.



[Hon. Pier Ferdinando Casini, Senator; Former President, National Assembly; Honorary Chairman, Interparliamentary Union, Italy](#)

In his keynote speech, Italian Sen. Pier Ferdinando Casini, the former president of the National Assembly and the honorary chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, explained that the issue of Korean reunification is an example of the tension between political pragmatism and utopianism. While politics is rooted in "realism and concreteness," it feeds on utopian dreams like the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

He identified this tension in the hope of the historic summit in April 2018 of South and North Korean leaders at Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone but also in the pragmatism that extinguished those hopes.

Senator Cassini affirmed that "if reunification in a political sense appears today as a dream, a convergence of interests that makes the policies of the two countries head as much as possible toward the same direction does not seem to be impossible."

He said that the UPF support for peaceful Korean reunification could strengthen "a spirit of collaboration between the two Koreas, in the

awareness that it will be the most profitable political investment in view of resolving regional crises and building world peace."



[Dr. Claude Béglé, Swiss entrepreneur, founder and president of the investment company Symbioswiss](#)

Dr. Claude Béglé, an entrepreneur and former Swiss MP who has visited North Korea, expressed that the problem is not just between Seoul and Pyongyang. These nations fall between the tension of the two geopolitical camps led by China and the United States which he said are striving for hegemony. The Korean Peninsula is a buffer between these two camps. Dr. Béglé said that both South Korea and North Korea have pride in their achievements. The North Koreans have pride in overcoming severe sanctions to develop their own consumer market as well as nuclear weapons. He has experienced similarities between the peoples of the two nations because "Koreans are Koreans," he said. They are both hard-working and strive for excellence.

"People have to accept that the situation is not black or white, to acknowledge that they also made mistakes, as it happens in the process of transitional justice," Dr. Béglé said. "They have to learn to forgive each other, as Germany and France managed to do over time, allowing so for the European construction. Europe, by the way, could share with

the Koreans that experience of a real reconciliation after two successive horrible wars."

The Opening Session also highlighted a UPF initiative of its co-founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the highly successful Rally of Hope, by showing a compilation video of the five programs so far. Featuring speakers such as former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; former South African President F.W. de Klerk and World Food Programme CEO David Beasley, both Nobel laureates; Professor Sarah Gilbert, the co-inventor of Oxford University's COVID-19 vaccine; and former European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, the video heralded the sixth Rally of Hope, which was scheduled for May 9.



[M. Jacques Marion, co-chair, UPF Europe and Middle East, France](#)

Jacques Marion, regional co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, and the moderator of the Opening Session, reminded the audience that "the Sixth Rally of Hope will conclude our ILC2021 conference with the launch of a global working group of experts called Think Thank 2022, which will focus on the issue of peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula."



[Dr. Thomas Walsh, Chairman, UPF International, President, World Peace Road Foundation, USA](#)

Continuing that theme, Dr. Thomas Walsh, UPF International chairman, in his recorded message emphasized that there is a strong strategic plan to focus on moving the Korean Peninsula toward peace. To that end there have been 120 UPF webinars over the last three months leading up to these International Leadership Conferences. This network of experts across the world will link to the eight associations within UPF, and their peace efforts will be undertaken in a multi-sectoral manner. Fact-finding missions also will be held, once the pandemic allows, with high-level delegations visiting key stakeholder nations.

Dr. Walsh explained that the next UPF World Summit was planned for November 2021 in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the UPF co-founders' visit to North Korea in December 1991. If that is not possible, he said, then the World Summit will be held in the spring of 2022, gathering all the expert working groups from around the world in Seoul.



[Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, Co-Founder, Universal Peace Federation](#)

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founder of UPF, spoke of the Korean War and the miracle of 16 UN member nations coming forward to support South Korea in that war. Tearfully referring to those soldiers, many of whom were still in their teens, as heroes of the providence, Dr. Moon said she was determined that they will not be forgotten. Many of those veterans, now in their 90s, have stated that they want to see a peacefully united Korea. Dr. Moon expressed her desire to see that each of those contributing nations has a monument on which the fallen soldiers' names are inscribed.

With that emotion fresh in the audience's mind, the session concluded with an outline of the ILC schedule of webinars, following the structure of the eight UPF associations promoting the dream of Korean unification through practical and realistic means.

