

## 550 + Officials Attend International Leadership Conference 2018 in Seoul, Korea

Tom McDevitt  
February 19, 2018



International Leadership Conference 2018  
*Building a World of Lasting Peace:  
Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values*

**Universal Peace Federation  
International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace  
Interreligious Association for Peace and Development**

**Seoul, Korea** -- More than 550 experts and officials from over 90 countries met at the 2018 UPF International Leadership Conference (ILC).

The conference took place from February 18 to 22 at the Lotte Hotel World under the theme "Building a World of Lasting Peace: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values."

Two UPF initiatives were featured during the conference: the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) and the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD).

Special events included the launch of the nomination process for the 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize and the Founders' Birthday Celebration at the CheongShim Peace World Center (February 21).



## Opening Banquet

The **Opening Banquet** on Sunday, February 18, featured an invocation by **Pastor T.L. Barrett**, senior pastor, Life Center Church of God in Christ, United States, and a member of the National Executive Committee of the American Clergy Leadership Conference, an organization that is affiliated with UPF.

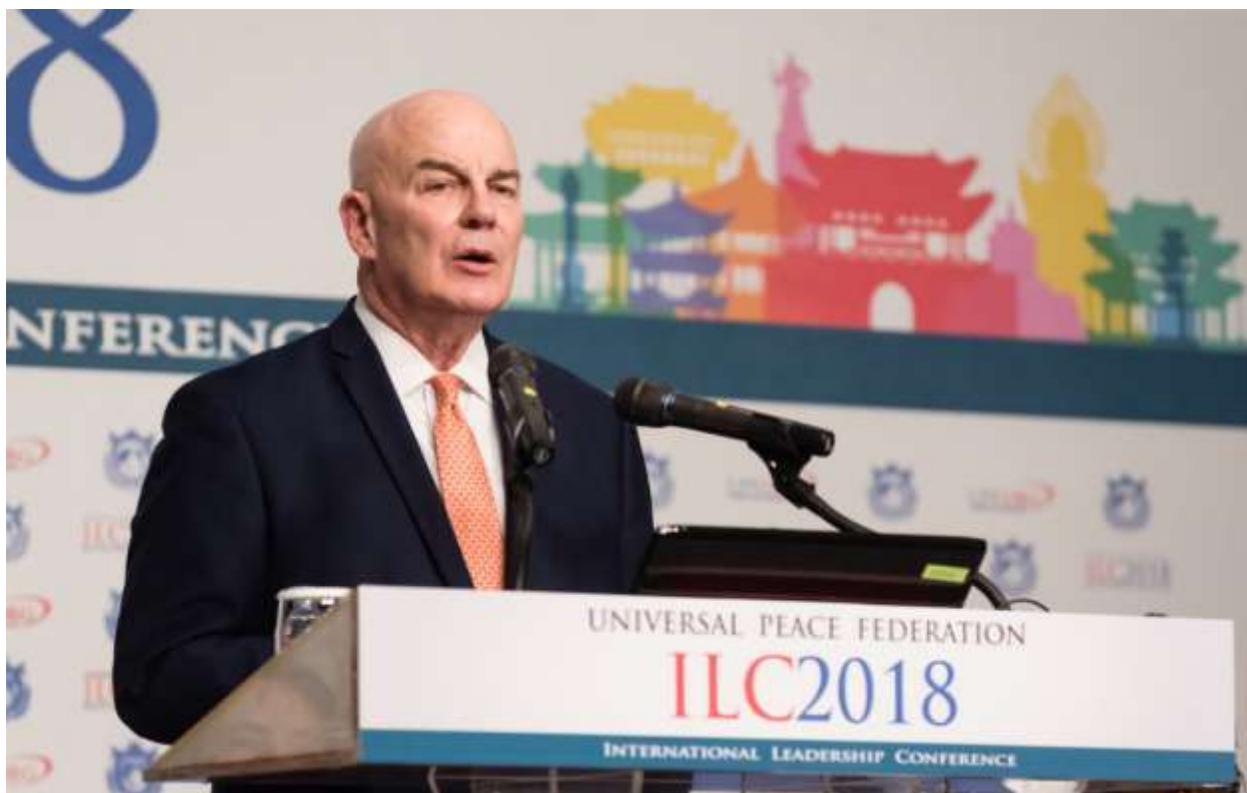
**Dr. Thomas G. Walsh**, the chair of UPF International, offered welcoming remarks in which he gave a general orientation to the ILC and the underlying principles and ethics that drive the organization. "UPF's aspiration is to help bring the world together as one universal family under God," Dr. Walsh said. "We see this as not only a human quest, but indeed as the aspiration of our Creator, and the goal or objective of history, or providential history, that is a history that has meaning and purpose."

**Hon. José Alberto Alfaro**, former vice president, Legislative Assembly, Costa Rica, and the president of IAPP, Central America, called on all religious and political leaders to put aside differences and work together to achieve peace in the world. "We must leave our petty and private interests and begin to think about the common good," he said. "The road toward a global and lasting peace is our responsibility to make a reality."

**Hon. Paray Rushto Vijay**, a congressman in the House of Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago, and the president of IAPP, Trinidad and Tobago, said he was excited to work with UPF to strengthen his nation. "A world of peace is the foundation for economic prosperity, strong families make strong communities, and strong communities make peace for all," he said.

**Archbishop George Augustus Stallings Jr.**, the national co-chair of ACLC, recalled the invocation by Pastor Barrett, who spoke of the divinity of our identity. We are born with a purpose and that comes from our Creator, Archbishop Stallings said. "We're not defined by our politics, gender, socio-economic backgrounds. ... We are spiritual beings growing in the flesh." He quoted Martin Luther King Jr. on the interrelated structure to reality. "In a *real sense all life* is inter-related. *All men* are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects *all* indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be."

It was a beautiful evening and beginning to the ILC program. Participants were carried away by the entertainment of tenor **Seung Il Kim**, the delicious dinner and most particularly the conversations and networking that happen when conscientious people come together for a noble cause.



## Session I - The Vision and Work of Universal Peace Federation

On Day Two of the conference, February 19, **Session I** included presentations on the core values and principles that guide the work of UPF, as well as overviews of several UPF flagship programs, including the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), the Peace Road, UPF and UN Relations, and the Africa Summit 2018.

**Mr. Jacques Marion**, regional vice president of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, spoke about UPF and the founders' vision, which he said represents a new ethics of leadership and peacebuilding.

**Mr. Thomas P. McDevitt**, the *president of UPF International*, gave an overview of the history of IAPP, beginning with the inaugural event at the National Assembly in Seoul, Korea, in 2016 and subsequent events in 80 nations and outreach to 10,000 parliamentarians around the world.

**Dr. Michael W. Jenkins**, the national co-chair of ACLC, read from the inaugural resolution of IAPD: "We resolve to overcome the divisive tendencies that may emerge within religion, and to work to promote dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation so that we may more effectively work to solve the critical challenges of our time. . . ." The IAPD calls on all faiths to cooperate with one another and with the leaders of governments and civil societies.

**Dr. Tageldin Hamad**, vice president, UPF International, described the work of the UPF and UN Relations. UPF works closely with numerous projects associated with the UN, Dr. Hamad said. He elaborated on the proposal for an interreligious council at the UN, parallel with the General Assembly, which was presented by UPF co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon on August 18, 2000. This proposal has laid the foundation for many interreligious activities. He also spoke about Africa Day, an important outreach program of UPF, which co-sponsors with the African Union and honors the important contributions of African culture and people.

**Sheikh Mansour Diouf**, the president of the Steering Committee of Africa Summit 2018, gave a moving testimony about the summit, which was held in Dakar, Senegal, from Jan. 18 to 22. Despite challenges coming from various religious and government bodies, he said, with determination and God's support, the program was a success, particularly in developing UPF's base of operations in Africa, relations with the president of Senegal, and, most significantly, the comforting presence of UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her concern for the continent.

**Rev. Adama Doumbia**, the regional secretary general of UPF for Africa, related an anecdote in which someone asked Mother Moon, "Why did you come to Senegal?" Mother Moon replied, "I came to Africa because I love Senegal." Rev. Doumbia said she came with a mother's heart. He was so moved by such a simple and honest expression of love. There was no ulterior motivation or any selfish expectation of gain. She came not to take but to give. Before the actual conference, Mother Moon had sent a team of missionaries to organize prayers of liberation, which Rev. Doumbia said laid a spiritual foundation for the ultimate success of the summit. She applied the principles of peace to assure a successful Africa Summit.



## **Session II - Sunhak Peace Prize**

**Session II** focused the **Sunhak Peace Prize**, including an introduction to the history and guiding ideals that characterize the prize, past laureates from 2015 and 2017, and announcements concerning the preparation for the 2019 prize.

The Sunhak Peace Prize, established by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to continue the legacy of her husband, is given biennially in recognition of individuals and organizations that contribute to resolving worldwide suffering, conflict, poverty and threats to the environment. It first was awarded in 2015 and then again in 2017. The next award will take place in early 2019.

**Dr. Young Ho Yun**, the secretary general of FFWPU International, another organization affiliated with UPF, described the Sunhak Peace Prize as the "fruit of many organizations." He read a heartfelt message

from the founder, who wrote, "There must be equality in order to have peace. Only when we attend God as our eternal Parent can we have lasting peace." The IAPP and IAPD were launched to solve all the inequalities around the world, Dr. Yun said. Africa is generally perceived as a continent of suffering, but Mother Moon sees Africa as the "continent of the future," Dr. Yun said. "The purpose of the SHPP is to find the heroes of peace."

Committee members offered reflections on the Peace Prize, beginning with **Hon. Yoshinori Ohno**, former minister of defense, Japan, who spoke about barriers to lasting peace including global warming, food shortage and refugees. He coined the term "peace power" as a strategy to create cultures of peace and cultures without violence and war.

**Hon. Jose de Venecia Jr.**, five-time speaker of the House of Representatives, Philippines, and international co-chair of IAPP, praised the founders for "their sustained commitment and tireless efforts in promoting peace, reconciliation and unity, interfaith dialogue, the strengthening of marriage and family, and many other heart-warming initiatives, in Asia and in the global community."

**Ambassador Tae Ik Chung**, the chair of the Korean Council on Foreign Relations, spoke about the 2018 Winter Olympic Games, which were being held in PyeongChang, South Korea, at the same time as the ILC. Ambassador Chung referred to the unified team from both North and South Korea and said he hopes the cooperation will lead to improved relations and reduced tension on the Korean Peninsula. He noted how serious is the situation due to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. "All the world's attention is focused on the Korean Peninsula," Ambassador Chung said. He said he is hopeful that the Sunhak Peace Prize will contribute to peace in the world.

**Dr. Il Sik Hong**, chair of the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee, spoke about his love and respect for the founders and their mission to establish a world of true harmony and compassion for humanity. "Only based on love can we establish a world of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values," he said. He asked for the support of all the participants, requesting that, upon their return to their nations, they will become advocates for the organization.

For Session III in the afternoon the conference participants divided up -- parliamentarians attended a program at the **National Assembly**, while the religious leaders participated in the launching of the Korean chapter of the **Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD)**.



### **Session III (A) - International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace**

At the National Assembly, Korean parliamentarian **Hon. Jong-seong Lim** called for the use of diplomacy and open communication to lay a foundation for peaceful relations between the two Koreas.

The performance of the **Little Angels Children's Folk Ballet of Korea** opened hearts and minds and underscored the central theme that universal values are shared beyond language and national differences. Subsequent speakers referred to the children's performance as evidence that barriers can be transcended

and peace is attainable when the hearts of all humanity are touched.

**Hon. Dan Burton**, a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1983-2013) and an international co-chair of IAPP, began his remarks by acknowledging "the far-reaching and broad representation of attendees ... encouraging mutual respect," which was evident to all in attendance. He spoke about the value of parliamentarians working together under a unified vision and praised recent progress toward peace on the Korean Peninsula, most specifically North and South Korea hosting a unified team of Olympic competitors. "It is a much-needed breath of fresh air. People are daring to express hope that this will last," Congressman Burton said.

Prominent Korean congressional leader **Hon. Shim Jaekwon**, chair of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, observed how the 2018 Olympic Games in PyeongChang managed to bring a delegation from North Korea -- creating an "open exchange that underscores the hope that diplomacy can bring a resolution of age-old conflicts along the Korean Peninsula."

IAPP delegates from Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Oceania, and Latin America spoke eloquently about the need for global dialogue and cooperation as epitomized by IAPP's efforts.

**Hon. Abdelmajid Fassi-Fihri**, a member of the House of Representatives of Morocco, said he is filled with hope "to see such a diversity of participants all gathered for this noble cause and goal for peace." Members of parliament have a significant role in promoting peace, he said, "since we are directly linked to our constituencies, on the one hand, and on the other we make the laws." Morocco's king, His Majesty Mohammed VI, the chair of the Al Quds Committee (Jerusalem Committee), is committed to promoting peace in the Middle East, he said. He also mentioned the Amir al Muminin in Morocco, who he said is dedicated to establishing values that prevent extremism.

**Hon. Angela Guerra**, an assemblywoman from Portugal, pointed out that we live in an interdependent world and we are all connected. "What affects one country, good or bad, affects the world. All around the world there is catastrophic suffering due to extreme poverty, violent conflicts, terrorism, and the impact of climate change. These tragic realities affect us all." As a member of the UN, Portugal played an active role in drafting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, she said. Also, as a member of the Lusophone Commonwealth, Portugal understands the need to give more attention to the issues of peace, security and good governance. "Only with the wisdom and strength of statesmen and stateswomen, from around the world, working together toward common goals, can there be global change that yields prosperity and peace. Thus we all have a role to play so that no one is left behind!"

**Hon. Dr. Jiko Luveni**, speaker of the House, Fiji, explained it is through the elected representatives that "the voices of the people we represent are heard in government. We must advance issues for the public good. ... Equally important, we ourselves must be people of good character, guided by our conscience and universal moral principles. As political leaders, we parliamentarians hold positions of power in our various nations and, as such, must practice spiritual principles and moral laws that are based on the existence of God, our Creator. This will ensure that there is good governance where people live in peace, in harmony with their fellow men and live lives of goodness."

**Hon. Andy Daniel**, president of the Senate of St. Lucia, reminded the audience of the devastation from the 2017 hurricane season that many islands in the Caribbean are still suffering. He called on the participants, as global citizens, to introspect and embrace the views of Gandhi -- "A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes" -- and Buddha -- "We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think." Parliamentarians "need to look in the mirror," Hon. Daniel said, and embody honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, fairness, respectfulness and a strong sense of accountability.

Most powerfully, at the conclusion of the program **Hon. Jose de Venecia Jr.**, international co-chair of IAPP, called for the immediate resumption of the "Six-Party Talks" between the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan. Having been instrumental in opening diplomatic relations between North Korea and the Philippines, his frank and unfiltered approach was well received by both the international community and the South Korean officials in attendance.

Following the reading of the IAPP 2018 Northeast Asia Peace Proclamation, the participants were invited outside for the launching of **Peace Road 2018**, a global peace project of IAPP, which included a group photo in front of the National Assembly building and a bicycle ride.

### **Session III (B) - Interreligious Association for Peace and Development**

Concurrent with the event at the National Assembly, the Korean chapter of the **Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD)** was launched with the added attendance of 150 local Korean religious leaders.

President of the Korea Religions Association **Hon. Hyun Young Lee** welcomed the participants. He

described KRA as "a project for peace." The Korean Peninsula is a volatile area, he said, and the conference was meeting just 30 miles from the border between the two Koreas. He called for religious leaders to pray for peace. The Olympics "are the seed of hope and peace," he said. The IAPD will promote peace in the Korean Peninsula and aim to implement the vision of one family under God, he said.



This was followed by **Hon. Ki Seong Lee**, president of the Korean chapter of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, another organization affiliated with UPF. Hon. Lee described the Olympics as a symbol of harmony, which signals the hope and dream of humanity. The Olympics are a landmark launching pad for Korea to enter the world stage. He praised Dr. Hak Ja Moon for continuing the legacy of her late husband in establishing the Sunhak Peace Prize and IAPP and continuing to work for peace in the world. Through the Africa Summit, Hon. Lee said, the vision of Rev. Moon is being implemented. Religious leaders should interact with God and work to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, he said. "We should represent Heaven in each community and spread the gospel of hope to our neighbors. The goal of IAPD is world peace. To obtain religious peace, religious leaders should put these ideas into practice."

The IAPD Launching Resolution was read by **Hon. Jeong Soo Ahn**, president of the International Christian Mission Association. In part it reads:

*Religion was the means God used to restore humankind from the spiritual ignorance caused by the Fall. A religion without religious people ceases to be a religion. That is no more than an ideology. We must achieve world peace at the present day; yet we will never achieve it if we separate religious people from religions. Therefore, we believe that world peace cannot exist without religious peace. This also means that, without peace among religious people, world peace cannot be possible either.*

Congratulatory remarks were offered by several religious leaders, both from Korea and abroad. **Rev. Eleazer J. Ulysee**, pastor, the Evangelical Federation of La Romana, Dominican Republic, described peace as the product of our heart after we meet God through Jesus Christ. "With peace in our heart, we can work for peace and bring peace everywhere we go. ... Peace is given by God, and it is our responsibility as global citizens to share the blessing with others."

**Dr. Fumiya Sakow**, chief priest, Kojuin Temple, Japan, called for greater integration among the world's faiths. "Only the integrated religions, a perfect alliance of cultures for God and life, could lead the secularly divided worlds to get united as one holy world and eventually allow all people to live in perfect harmony which enjoys peace, happiness and co-prosperity under the common cause of God," he said.

**Dr. Alexandre Honrado**, professor of religious science, Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies, Portugal, spoke about humankind's desire for peace. "We are one family," he said. He praised the secretary general of the United Nations, António Guterres, who is Portuguese. Dr. Honrado said he is working to create an academic peace chair at the Lusophone University.

**Rev. Ari van Buuren**, former chair of the United Religions Initiative, Netherlands, referenced the biblical story of Jacob, the angel and Esau. Jacob said: "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And some hours later he said to Esau: "To see your face is like seeing the face of God." Rev. van Buuren

described this as the model for an attitude that transcends hatred and war. It shows a new pattern of forgiveness and reconciliation. "We are interdependent, and, like Jacob, we need to see the face of God in the face of one another. As religious leaders, we should transmit this godly message!"

**The Water Ceremony for Religious Harmony and Peace** was conducted with the additional presence of four prominent religious leaders: **Bishop Joel Barnaby**, senior pastor, Greater Church of Philadelphia, USA; **Mrs. Alma Faye McDonnell**, first lady, the Wealth Place Ministries, USA; **Pastor Raymond Giddens**, pastor, Unity Baptist Church, USA; and **Cheikh Abdelkader Achour**, imam, Muslim Association of Faith and Practice, France.



#### **Session IV - Building a World of Lasting Peace**

**Session IV** continued the discussion on perspectives on Building a World of Lasting Peace, beginning with **Mrs. Hanna Mitra Rambaran**, president, United Religions Initiative (URI), Netherlands, who said, "Religion must be a source of peace, a messenger of peace, and an inspiration to harmony." Regarding the role of religious leaders, Mrs. Rambaran called on "the leaders of religions to influence the people, especially the youth and their parents. They must work together with politicians in regard to solving conflicts. Religious leaders must seek each other through dialogues and cooperation in building a sustainable peace."

**Dr. Mohsen Mouelhi**, vicar general, Sufi Jerrahi Halveti, Italy, pointed out, "We've been talking about peace, but we don't have a clear definition of peace." In common parlance, peace is the absence of war, but that is not necessarily true. For example, a person who is terminally ill, homeless or unemployed is not at war yet is not at peace. Jihad, contrary to popular opinion, does not mean war, he said. "It is an effort to improve our situation and has nothing to do with war." We live in a society of paradox. "Does it make sense to spend billions to go to Mars to look for water, when we should be using that money and scientific expertise to find water for the drought-stricken areas of the world?"

**Dr. Saleem Ahmed**, president, All Believers Network, USA, spoke about his organization, which was founded 13 years ago and explores different paths for religion. He highlighted the commonalities among religions. "It is the same God in all religions," he said. "Religion is about dialogue and understanding. True faiths seek to live positively. These are the qualities that bring people of all faiths together, regardless of external differences."

**Rt. Rev. Joseph M. Kanuku**, bishop emeritus, Anglican Church of Kenya, said: "We exist to fulfill God's purpose, which is to live for the sake of others. Whether it is work or pleasure, we should always try to live for the sake of others." When he looks at a person, he said, "I see a person with two dimensions: an inner person and an external person. The inner person should be connected to the almighty God. When one is connected to the almighty God, then God will control all thoughts and actions. If there is no peace in the heart, there will be no peace in the nation."

**Ven. Lama Lobzang**, president, International Buddhist Confederation, India, spoke on the value of giving to another without any expectation of something in return. "That is the way of Buddha," he said. To give selflessly is a core virtue found in most religions and spiritual paths. It is to give without attachment, only for the sake of giving. Quoting the Buddha, he said that if people only knew the value of giving as he does, they would not take a single meal without sharing their food with others. This

sentiment, he said, is reflected in many faiths which embrace the virtues of generosity and kindness.

**Professor Nusrat Sultana**, general secretary, United Religions Initiative, Bangladesh, quoted the Koran: "Make not mischief on the earth." The Koran calls on people to be peacemakers, she said. Professor Sultana reminded the participants that "happiness cannot be independent of others; we are interrelated." She called on everyone to "identify ourselves with the higher self. We should see the person in front of or behind us as having the same right to life as me." Professor Sultana recalled the core values of UPF and said that these principles can help to realize lasting peace in the world.

**Session IV-Part Two** continued the discussion on perspectives on Building a World of Lasting Peace. **Acharya Shrivatsa Goswami**, head priest, Sri Radharamana Temple, India, spoke about Hinduism and world peace. He quoted Mahatma Gandhi: "There's no department of life which can be divorced from religion." In many countries, at least in recent times, religion is kept separate from civil society, but the speaker said that separation has negative consequences. "It's like trying to keep the electricity away from the appliances," he said. Spirituality is a necessary part of life, he said, and the more it is incorporated into our daily lives, the more we can obtain a sense of happiness and peace.

**Professor Syafaatun Almirzanah**, professor of religious studies, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Indonesia, recounted the story of Cain and Abel as it is written in the Koran. The story teaches many things, he said, particularly that envy can lead to violence. The Koran teaches that human history represents a progressive divine revelation through the prophets, he said, and that there is important value in self-reflection and understanding one's purpose in life.

**Hajji Baba Edmond Brahimaj**, world leader, Bektashi Order (Islamic Sufi), Albania, described his country, which due to its location has been an important crossroads between the Orient and the Occident. There are four religious communities in Albania: the Sunni Muslim community, the Autocephalous Orthodox Christian Church of Albania, the Catholic Christian Church, and the Bektashi Muslim community. The faith communities coexist in peace and harmony. He reminded the participants of the most famous Albanian, Mother Teresa.

**Bishop Luis Rodrigo Moreno**, bishop, Anglican Church of Ecuador, spoke about the Anglican Church in South America, tracing its history back to 1830 and the church's role in the country's independence from Spain. The church was also active in economic and social development with the construction of railroads and roads. The church has defended and stood for freedom and development and believes that it's important "to develop a global consciousness to obtain lasting peace. Peace by itself will not come as a gift. There is work to be done; religious leaders must compromise with all our hearts to do this work."

**Dr. Khattar Salami El Kantar**, vice president, Lebanese Canadian University, Lebanon, is a representative of the Druze community, which is an Abrahamic religion based on Islam. He described the difficult history of Lebanon, including wars and destruction. Religion has played an important role in bringing the people together. "Religious leaders should plant seeds of love, instead of fundamentalism and terrorism, in order to jump to the highest level of peace, humanism, and love in the world. ... We as Ambassadors for Peace are ready to invest all our efforts to create and bring peace to organizing conferences in the highest level to bring everlasting peace in the world."

**Rev. Dr. Igor Onyshchuk**, patriarchal curia communications officer, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Ukraine, said some of the universal principles and values of the Catholic Church -- solidarity, peace and security -- may be applied to international relations. "This social doctrine can become the basis for dialogue with all who sincerely seek good for humanity," he said. Dialogue between religion and culture is needed to obtain justice, brotherhood, peace and development, he said. He referred to Pope Francis, who emphasizes the need to understand each person as part of humankind and the need to get out of oneself to join others in the creation of solidarity. In other words, "We all are in the same boat and float to the same pier!"

The second day of the ILC, February 20, dealt with many of the major challenges facing the nations of the world. The leaders and experts discussed these critical issues, not only at the local or national levels but also how to work together on the regional, continental and world levels. As the world faces unprecedented obstacles to peace -- the global refugee crisis, the spread of terrorism, climate change, energy and environmental issues, water scarcity, world hunger, and, more recently, heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula -- an optimistic spirit pervaded the conference atmosphere. The interplay between the political and religious leaders brought a sense of trust, hope, and faith.