

A More Feminine Approach to Peacemaking: IAFLP Peace in the Pacific Rim

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Background: The International Leadership Conference (ILC), consisting of virtual seminars held in multiple time zones around the world, was hosted by [Universal Peace Federation \(UPF\)](#) from April 28-30, 2021. The ILC featured each pillar association of UPF, to expand discourse over the theme, "Toward the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values." As a partner of UPF, [Women's Federation for World Peace, International \(WFWP\)](#) co-sponsored the [International Association of First Ladies for Peace \(IAFLP\)](#) sessions within the ILC.

The International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) presented the fifth virtual session of the International Leadership Conference (ILC) across the North, Central, and South Americas and the Caribbean, on April 29, 2021, at 10 AM EDT. Prominent panelists, including current and former First and Second Ladies, addressed the theme "Women Leaders' Perspectives on Peace in the Pacific Rim." The program was attended by 248 participants live.

Moderator Dr. Susan Taffer, Founder of World Connections Foundation, greeted everyone warmly and presented an [introductory video of the Founding of IAFLP](#) that occurred in February of 2020.

Mrs. Angelika Selle, IAFLP Americas Chair and WFWP USA President, extended a warm welcome to the distinguished panel and esteemed participants. Calling attention to the concerns of the Pacific Rim and the Korean Peninsula, Mrs. Selle pointed to lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, looking beyond borders to address common threats together. In addition, she highlighted the instinctive motherly heart of women, and how integrating this perspective can lead to significant advances in the peacemaking process.

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

Additionally, Dr. Moon highlighted the notable work of U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and her instrumental role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Likewise, she encouraged each of us to contribute our unique talents to the betterment of the world.

Hon. Mrs. Mignon E. Bowen-Phillips, wife of the current Prime Minister of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, shared Guyana's experiences of mass violence pre-independence, threats to democracy, and extended periods of Venezuela claiming territory as their own. Given this history, her country could empathize with the challenges faced on the Korean Peninsula.

Acknowledging the limited communication between the two conflicting states, she conveyed the

importance of governments and global stakeholders to continue in solidarity, and seek solutions to humanitarian concerns.

Hon. Mdm. María Fernanda Flores de Alemán, First Lady of the Republic of Nicaragua from 1997-2002, placed the situation on the Korean Peninsula into perspective. With over 70 years of tension and bouts of violence between the two Koreas, a solution to the conflict has yet to be found. Although the demilitarized zone was established in 1953, with the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement, the location remains as one of the most militarized points in the world. While many efforts have been made over the years, the historic visit of UPF founders to North Korea stands out, resulting in positive projects for its citizens.

Hon. Alemán shared about the extreme political divide in Nicaragua caused by injustice, and how this division has prevented economic and socio-political 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 of the Republic of Paraguay from 2012-2013, shared Paraguay's experience in bringing together their 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 from every nation, Hon. Franco empowered all to raise their voices and gain visibility, to effect change on the major concerns of our time.

Moderator Dr. Taffer then opened the floor for questions, which sparked a most engaging and spirited discussion with panelists, alongside IAFLP and WFWP representatives. 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 make change, and to invest in our 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 D.C. in October 2022.

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

Watch the Recording:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQ99iI-FkY

Comments from Participants:

This was a fantastic event where we can hear from distinguished women leaders how they are working toward 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 WFWPI 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.