

WFWP USA's GWPN: Women's Perspectives on a Peaceful Reunification of Korea

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The Global Women's Peace Network USA (GWPN), a project of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), held a special Women's Leadership in Reconciliation and Peacemaking series forum in collaboration with WFWP Korea. The session, marking 71 years since the outbreak of the Korean War, addressed "The Case of North and South Korea," focusing on a peaceful reunification. The program took place on June 21, 2021, with a uniquely diverse panel of expert speakers, and over 150 participants registered from the U.S. and around the world.

Moderator Angelika Selle, GWPN USA Chair and WFWP USA President, began by describing the purpose and significance of the program, and the WFWP Founders' desire and unique efforts to peacefully bring together their divided home country of Korea. She outlined the key points to be addressed during this forum, including the importance of women's leadership for unification, approaches to human rights issues, and methods of reconciling differing ideologies.



Welcoming Remarks by Dr. Julia H. Moon, President of WFWP International



The Governor's Interfaith Outreach Director, Ms. Jennifer Gray, sharing a congratulatory message from First Lady Yumi Hogan of the State of Maryland

Dr. Julia H. Moon, President of [WFWP International](#), extended her warm welcoming remarks, and hopes for a fruitful discussion. Highlighting WFWP Co-Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's teachings on living by the logic of love and honoring our common creator, the great importance of coming together to mend this world of conflict and separation, poverty, and environmental degradation was emphasized. "WFWP International, through its various projects, including GWPB, utilizes spiritual insights that elevate the pursuit of peace in a very effective way."

First Lady Yumi Hogan of the State of Maryland sent a congratulatory letter to commend the gathering, as read by Governor's Interfaith Outreach Director, Ms. Jennifer Gray. She shared, "As a daughter of Korea, my heart is heavy for all the victims and families impacted by the Korean war. As we remember the lives that were lost and altered during this conflict, it is our responsibility to create a safer tomorrow for future generations. I applaud all of the great female leaders and peacemakers gathered here today."



Main speakers of the event

Joining from South Korea, panelist Dr. Yang-Ho Hong, North Korea Social Research Center President at the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, described the history and current landscape of tensions between North and South Korea, and the difficult circumstances people have experienced as a result. Considering the suffering caused by the Korean War and to prevent another war from occurring, South Korea has made gradual attempts towards peaceful reunification. This desire for cooperation, however, was met with resistance, as a possible threat to the North Korean regime. Over the years there have been periodic attempts to increase cultural exchange, including seminars that promoted interactions between North and South Korean women. Dr. Hong highly suggested an increase of such gatherings of

women in all levels of society, as he believes that women's unique tendency toward inclusiveness, non-violence, and sincerity can play an important role in bringing resolution.

The second panelist from the US, Amanda Mortwedt Oh, a human rights attorney at [The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea](#), advocates for human rights issues alongside those who have escaped North Korea. She offered three recommendations and steps in order for the two countries to peacefully reunite. As a concept developed by Former Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon, Ms. Oh advised to start with an upfront human rights approach and assessment process. This is to increase awareness about the facts and what is happening, and to encourage all parties to prioritize resolving human rights issues. In order to do this, human rights standards would need to be discussed and agreed upon, including how these standards would continue to be monitored. To further build trust, she shared examples of steps of good faith that could be arranged, such as allowing family reunions or releasing political prisoners. Finally, Ms. Oh emphasized the need for individuals to share their stories and experiences, to allow for justice, documentation, and accountability to take place. By setting up these practices and mutual agreements, long-term reconciliation and understanding can take place.

Panelist Rev. Belina Wimbish-Haile, Founder and CEO of Belina Ministries Int'l and BeYOUtyful Solutions, provided a heartfelt personal perspective on this issue. As someone who experiences the disparities in society as a woman and as a person of African descent, she understands the need for peace at both the macro and micro levels. When looking at the separation of the Korean Peninsula, she shared the helpful starting point that the people already share a common cultural bond. Moving forward, instead of imposing outside ideas and solutions, she encouraged others to lift up the voices of the Korean women and support their mission and needs. Listening to the dire concerns from mothers will help to motivate humanitarian change. Rev. Wimbish-Haile advised everyone to consider how to approach the conversation with love, so that fear is not the leading factor.



Dr. Lan Young Moon's special remarks



Kiyomi explaining about the 1% Love Share Project fundraising campaign

Following a robust question and answer session between participants and panelists, Dr. Lan Young Moon, Professor at SunHak Universal Peace Graduate University and Former WFWP International President, shared a touching, special message on her 19 visits to North Korea for reconciliation, and initiating the '1% Love Share Project' to collect relief aid to support women and children in North Korea and worldwide. She shared, "With our continued efforts to help North Korean women and children, without any political agenda, I felt the hearts of North Korean women leaders begin to open up."

WFWP USA Outreach Director Kiyomi Schmidt invited participants to take action and contribute to the [1% Love Share Project](#). Donations to this campaign through WFWP USA in 2021 will help to sponsor two after school programs for North Korean defectors, and support the NK Human Rights International Association to help North Korean defectors who are escaping via third countries.



The Little Angels Children's Folk Ballet performing "We are the World"

Moderator Mrs. Selle then took the opportunity to describe and give away three copies of the eloquent, moving book, ["Mother of Peace: And God Shall Wipe Away All Tears from Their Eyes."](#) This memoir tells the true story of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's life, from escaping North Korea during the Korean War, stepping into her divine calling, and the incredible achievements she and her late husband have made for peace and reconciliation worldwide. To conclude the program, a fitting rendition of ["We are the World" performed by the Little Angels Children's Folk Ballet](#) was enjoyed.

We thank all of those who contributed to and participated in this substantial, thought-provoking forum! With global support, we look forward to the awe-inspiring reunification on the Korean peninsula after these many years.

Watch the Recording: vimeo.com/566367166