

## Taiwan Commemorates the International Year of Peace and Trust

Tuo Huan Chen  
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Taipei, Taiwan -- UPF-Taiwan held its 2021 Annual General Assembly in the International Conference Hall of National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei on March 20 with 110 attendees. The chapter presented the results of its activities in 2020 and its plans for this year, as well as honored 18 social leaders with an Ambassador for Peace award.

The one-day event also commemorated 2021 as the International Year of Peace and Trust by featuring a seminar on "The Road to Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula in 2022." The Year, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2019 ([A/RES/73/338](#)), seeks to mobilize the efforts of the international community "to promote peace and trust among nations as a value that promotes sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights."



Among the three speakers who presented at the seminar were

To-hai Liou, professor at the College of International Affairs, Department of Diplomacy of National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taipei;

Tung-chieh Tsai of the Graduate Institute of International Politics of National Chung-Hsing University in Taichung; and

Ming Lee, professor at the College of International Affairs, Department of Diplomacy of the NCCU.

The first speaker was Dr. To-hai Liou, professor at the College of International Affairs, Department of Diplomacy of National Chengchi University, who spoke about the possibility of the unification of the

Korean Peninsula. Crucial for this possibility to be realized is a willingness to dialogue, as a starting point; exchange among civil society; and economic cooperation from both sides. On the topic of North Korea's economy, Dr. Liou stated that the country's economic growth is dependent on mainland China and that North Korea has initiated many projects to try to bolster its tourism industry. Regarding economic sanctions and nuclear disarmament, this is a critical issue that needs to be solved. Dr. Liou also mentioned that a major transformation that could take place on the Peninsula in the future is the construction of a railway, such as a high-speed railway, suggested by South Korea, that links South and North Korea together and with the rest of the world. Other nations might not be so keen to see it happen as it could lead to a sudden increase in the population and expansion of the size of the economy. However, no one can stop the unification of North and South Korea if both countries are ready to discuss the issue.



The second speaker, Dr. Tung-chieh Tsai of the Graduate Institute of International Politics, National Chung-Hsing University, began his remarks by saying that Northeast Asia is a region surrounded by superpowers with heavy weapons. If there is no war, it means peace. Dr. Tsai also spoke about recent developments in North Korea. In 2020, due to economic sanctions and COVID-19, North Korea suffered a great deal from a shrinking economy, which also affected its plans to improve its economy and relations with other countries. The trade war between the U.S. and China impelled many countries, including North Korea, to change their strategies. The six-party talks could be continued, depending on the attitudes of the governments of the two Koreas. Currently, there is a big gap between the economies of the North and South. North Korea has been suffering from a recession and a high rate of poverty and therefore, at the present time, isn't pushing for unification. Dr. Tsai concluded by saying that North Korea's greatest concern is its economy and trade rather than reunification.

The commentator, Dr. Ming Lee, professor at the College of International Affairs, Department of Diplomacy of National Chengchi University, said that peace is priceless and that we should achieve it by all means, even though it is difficult to do so. Dr. Lee sees that South Korean President Moon Jae-in has a strong will for unification to be realized. The issue of economic sanctions and nuclear disarmament has left North Korea with no choice but to maintain its status quo. Keeping the Kim regime after unification is a greater concern to North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un than a unified Korea is. Speaking on the unification of Germany, the late German Chancellor Helmut Kohl once said, "We all need Europe, not just those of us in Europe. And we Germans need Europe more than the others." Mr. Kohl understood that the unification of Germany could not rely on others. Meanwhile, he led European nations to see that German unification was not a threat to Europe. Hopefully, Mr. Kim can have the same mindset toward the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula, gaining the trust of neighboring countries.