

Third Rally of Hope Keynote Address: A United Korea - A Regional Powerhouse

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I am, president of the House of Representatives of Colombia, the legislative body and the highest law-making institution of the Presidential Republic of Colombia. I have attended various events hosted by the Universal Peace Federation in Korea and once again, I am pleased to attend today's Rally of Hope.

Today's rally shows the profound importance and meaning that peace between North Korea and South Korea would have for today's world. This importance is derived from Korea's history. In the 1950s, war broke out, leading to the great tragedy that is the separation of Korea into North Korea and South Korea. In these circumstances, only one Latin American country, the nation of Colombia, sent troops with the fundamental mission of bringing peace and stability on the Peninsula. Yes, that nation was Colombia. Colombia deployed a

battalion and this important action has forged an eternal link with the history of South Korea. Since then, we have not only maintained diplomatic relations, but also expanded our relationship to include commerce, culture, sports, and so on.

Since the 1950s, great efforts have been made to build stronger ties with both Koreas by signing agreements and treaties, especially in the last decade. However, these efforts could not materialize quickly enough to bring the intended benefits, fundamentally due to the North Korean government's way of governing, leading to growing frustration.

The involvement of global superpowers like the United States is favorable for the pursuit of realizing peace. Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is fundamental. This guarantees a stable and lasting peace, not only for that region of the world, but for the whole world. Today's Rally of Hope, hosted by the Universal Peace Federation, will certainly see the materialization of important initiatives. The first of these is a shared identity. Were the two Koreas to be unified again, they would once again share the same cultural identity, the same language and the same idioms. This would have a profound meaning for the world.

Furthermore, a unified Korea carries tremendous potential in the areas of science, the arts, literature, culture and sports. The world knows that a unified Korea would be one of the major powers in the region and in the world in all these areas. It is here that the Rally of Hope can help bring to fruition efforts aimed at unification and a common identity.

Despite global support, the two Koreas have remained divided for several decades. Nevertheless, everywhere around the world, we will not give up on the process of reunification. Here in Colombia, we will continue to support reunification and the development of the common points the two Koreas have shared for several decades. Once the entire world sees that they share the same identity and identify themselves with the same language, the world will recognize the fact that the two Koreas are brothers who can live together peacefully.