

World Summit Turns Attention to Asia-Pacific

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Seoul, Korea—Challenges and opportunities in the Asia-Pacific Region were the theme of Plenary Session VII of the 3rd World Summit.

The session, “Perspectives on Peace and Human Development: Asia-Pacific,” took place on August 29, 2015, at the InterContinental Grand Seoul Parnas hotel.

Panelists from various nations offered their thoughts on issues, challenges and opportunities that impact the nations and peoples of the Asia-Pacific Region. **Mr. Seiichi Kikuya**, regional secretary general, UPF-Japan, served as moderator.

Dr. Nancy Hsiao-hung Chen, Control Yuan, Taiwan, gave an overview of the Asia-Pacific Region. Twenty-one economies are members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The area is immense, covering almost one-quarter of the world’s land area, and is home to more than half the world’s population. The Asia-Pacific Region is diverse in all aspects: GDP, life expectancy, trade, fertility, education, religion, politics, health, freedom, security and the Gross National Happiness index. It’s been more than 50 years since U.S. President John F. Kennedy addressed the U.N. General Assembly and launched a proposal for a Development Decade to “lessen the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries, to speed up the processes of modernization, and to release the majority of mankind from poverty.”



Dr. Chen said, “Many developing countries still struggle with the vicious cycle of poverty, socio-economic disparity, social exclusion/inclusion, on top of the many newly rising issues such as global warming, climate change, refugees, contagious disease, environment sustainability, and world terrorism.” What can be done? Dr. Chen recommended, “Think globally, act locally,” meaning to be aware of the issues facing our world but to take action in our own communities and cities. She encouraged everyone to work with the government, NGOs, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) at the grass-roots level, and the

public and private sector. She also suggested that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) play a role in developing the region. The challenges faced are not only technical and political but, more importantly, are for the betterment of humanity.

Hon. Gozde Dizdar, founder and director, Governance and Development (GD Global), Turkey, quoted the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who said, “Peace at home, peace in the world.” There are significant changes under way in the world, beginning with the distribution of world power, which is shifting away from the Atlantic toward the Pacific. Also the integrating forces of globalization are shaping new relationships among states; between governments and societies as well. Technological and cultural revolutions as well as globalization are shaping a whole new world. She emphasized that with these fundamental changes, it’s necessary to “develop a system of ideas and ideals that will make globalization work for all our peoples.” Human development should be a prime focus for all of us, especially to improve the lives of all people, she said. This means to create an environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop to their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives that they value. Ms. Dizdar said, “What we need most are good role models, sincere relations, moral values, and getting united as a family.”



Ambassador Tetsuya Endo served in the United Kingdom and Mexico and is the former representative of Japan to the Japan-North Korea Normalization Talks. The ambassador shared his reflections on 50 years of normalized diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea. The Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and Korea was signed on June 22, 1965. Relations between the two nations have had their share of ups and downs, but “recent relations have been exceedingly poor ... and are not conducive to a bilateral summit meeting.” The ambassador cited several explanations: historical issues going back to Japan's colonial rule (1910-45) and jealousy related to Korea’s economic development, which has surpassed Japan’s previous regional dominance. Despite the deterioration of Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK) relations in the political and diplomatic arenas, at “the grass-roots level—citizen-level exchange, cultural and sports exchange, tourism, trade and investment—relations have remained smooth.” The 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties is an opportunity, the ambassador said, to “look dispassionately at the past and consider ways of rebuilding Japan-ROK relations.” He suggested, first, to deal with the historical lingering issues such as “comfort women”; second, further apologies are needed, particularly at the “citizen level”; third, rebuild lines of communication between Japan and Korea.

Ms. Sambridhi Gyawali, corporate affairs manager, Republic Media, Nepal, pointed out the wide discrepancies in the human development index that exist in the Asia-Pacific Region. For example, Australia ranks high while Nepal and Pakistan rank at the bottom. Similarly, with regard to peacefulness, there is a polarization, for example, “Pakistan and Afghanistan are regarded as the top least peaceful countries, while Japan, Australia and New Zealand are regarded as the most peaceful countries.” South Asia is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, according to Ms. Gyawali; however, “the region is home to 40 percent of the world’s poor (people who live on less than \$1.25 a day); more than 200 million live in slums, and half a billion go without electricity.” However, there is room for optimism, she said. “It also has the world’s largest working-age population and a quarter of the world’s middle-class consumers; hence the growth and development of this region are not only a possibility with the right foundations but also a necessity.” She pointed out that GNP is not the sole factor in ending poverty and establishing lasting peace. Good governance, education, and caring for the people are required. Investment in human capital needs to be emphasized, she said, which is to encourage virtue and respect, with particular focus on protecting the rights of women and children.

Dr. Alexander Mansourov, president, Great Falls Solutions International, United States, spoke about the vision and future of the Asia-Pacific Region. Dr. Mansourov is a specialist in Northeast Asian security. In the decades ahead, he expects the United States will continue working with its allies and maintain its presence in the region. Security alliances and trade investments will continue to grow and be strengthened. Regional institutions will enable and safeguard sustainable economic growth. This optimistic vision for the future reflects U.S. intrinsic values and hopes, but Dr. Mansourov cautioned wariness for the unexpected and the unanticipated. In other words, expect the best, plan for the worst, and prepare to be surprised.

“The key assumption is that the future will be like yesterday, but those ‘black swans’ can change the course of events in unexpected and untimely ways,” he said. Dr. Mansourov gave the example of the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan, which turned upside down the way of life for millions in just a few minutes. We cannot content ourselves with thinking only of one future or that life will continue as we know it, or that systemic changes are not possible, he said. We must forecast a future with new ideas and new thinking. More specifically, the issues of climate change and dwindling resources must be considered. Our world is entering the sixth wave of the technological future. Facebook, the online social networking service, has more than a billion users; this is a nation in itself. The future does not exist in the present.



Dr. Balmiki Prasad Singh, governor of the state of Sikkim, India, said threats to peace and human development emanate from four areas: 1) poverty, inequality, hunger and lack of education, 2) global warming, climate change and ecological disturbances, 3) geopolitics and new instruments of warfare, and (4) religious fundamentalism and terrorism. In terms of what can be done in these areas, Dr. Singh suggested 1) adequate funding for the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2) technologies should be developed for renewal energy to reduce dependence upon coal and gas 3) strengthen the United Nations with the view to make it an effective instrument of peace and the welfare of the people 4) augment the spiritual recourses of the people who then can influence their leaders to make meaningful decisions for peace and all-round development of the people.