



# UPF EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST NEWSLETTER



## WORLD SUMMIT 2025: ESTABLISHING A NEW ERA OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY

*From reports by UPF International*

World Summit 2025 was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from April 10 to 13 at the Lotte Hotel World. The theme was “Contemporary Challenges to World Order: Establishing a New Era of Peace and Prosperity.”

After an opening banquet on the evening of April 10, the first full day of the conference mainly featured the sixth Sunhak Peace Prize Award Ceremony (see page 3).

An Opening Ceremony and two plenary sessions followed later in the day. Concurrent programs for intergovernmental bodies were offered for the first time: the Forum of Presidents of Legislative Powers of Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico (FOPREL) which held its 31st

Extraordinary Meeting, and the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers’ Conference.

Plenary Session One was convened under the theme “Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations” (see page 4). Plenary Session Two discussed the “Vision for an Asia Pacific Union Forum.” A progress report on the Forum and the recently launched Universal Peace Charter was presented.

For the second day, participants could choose between various sessions, some of which were held elsewhere in Seoul or outside the city. This included a session on the environment and climate change; a series of sessions on Women and Peace; an international interfaith prayer meeting; and the

General Assembly of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP). At the same time, presidents of parliament from some 40 countries were holding a series of sessions which eventually culminated in the launch of the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers’ Conference (ISC).

Despite the ongoing political turmoil in South Korea, Representative Chung Dong-young of the Democratic Party of Korea and Representative Na Kyung-won of the People Power Party extended a warm welcome at the Republic of Korea National Assembly to IAPP representatives, speakers and deputy speakers from around the globe, former heads of state and other dignitaries.



1-7 | WORLD  
SUMMIT 2025



3 | SUNHAK  
PEACE PRIZE



12-13 | INTERFAITH  
HARMONY WEEK



14-15 | UN DAYS

## WORLD SUMMIT



H.E. Ban Ki-moon,  
secretary-general,  
United Nations  
(2007-2016)



H.E. Macky Sall,  
president,  
Republic of Senegal  
(2012-2024)



Dr. Paula White-Cain,  
senior advisor to US  
President Donald  
Trump, White House  
Faith Office



Dr. Charles Yang,  
chairman,  
UPF International



Dr. Yeon-Ah Moon,  
chair, World  
Summit Organizing  
Committee

On April 13, attendees of World Summit 2025 were invited to the entrance ceremony for the Cheon Won Temple in Gapyeong County. The building includes a museum and serves as the administrative headquarters for activities and projects initiated by the founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

Following the event, the nearby CheongShim Peace World Center stadium filled to capacity as viewers watched a musical drama, "Epic History of the Chosen Han People of Korea," which traces the 5,000-year history of the Korean people from their mythic beginnings through generations of struggle and perseverance. The performance served as a symbolic olive branch of peace, reminding North and South Koreans of their shared heritage and enduring kinship.



1 Left to right: H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Prophet Samuel Radebe, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, Ms. Wanjira Mathai, Mr. Hugh Evans, Mr. Patrick Awuah Jr.

2 Summit participants were treated to a performance of "Epic History of the Chosen Han People of Korea" at the CheongShim Peace World Center.

## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Mr. Jacques Marion, President, UPF Europe & the Middle East

Dear Readers,

Among the many events organized by UPF in the first half of this year, the World Summit 2025, held in April in Korea, stands out. A great part of our newsletter's first-semester issue features the Summit's

high-level sessions. The Summit began with a plenary session dedicated to the sixth award ceremony of the Sunhak Peace Prize, which honored prominent and young visionary leaders devoted to peace, human development and ecological conservation in Africa.

Another significant feature was the presence of 40 parliament leaders who launched the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference, a platform dedicated to addressing humanity's pressing challenges through collaborative dialogue and

diplomatic engagement.

In other sessions, religious leaders, parliamentarians, women leaders and environment scholars from around the world seized the opportunity to offer their vision and best practices for conflict transformation. The Summit ended with the participation of all world dignitaries in the inauguration of a new Interfaith Sanctuary for World Peace, guided in prayer and deep resolution by UPF Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

Meanwhile, as we celebrate 20 years of activity in this milestone year 2025, UPF Europe and Middle East chapters have been actively partnering with other organizations, Ambassadors for Peace, and volunteers to live up to our founding mission of supporting the United Nations.



## WORLD SUMMIT

# SIXTH SUNHAK PEACE PRIZE AWARDED TO YOUTHFUL, CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVERS

By Alan Sillitoe, communications director, UPF Europe and Middle East



Three visionary problem-solvers tackling major global challenges received the sixth Sunhak Peace Prize (SHPP) a decade after its founding by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

At the 2025 ceremony, H.E. Ban Ki-moon, eighth UN secretary-general and 2020 Founder's Award recipient, congratulated the laureates for advancing peace, sustainability, and leadership. He praised Dr. Moon's vision of "one peaceful human family" and urged continued efforts for a just, sustainable world.

H.E. Macky Sall, president of Senegal (2012–2024) and 2020 SHPP laureate, commended the laureates for their courage and patience in pursuing peace amid global crises. He called honoring such individuals "a moral duty" and appealed for collective commitment to peace, unity, and dignity.

The first laureate, Ms. Wanjira Mathai, chair of the Green Belt Movement, said that her mother, a Nobel Peace laureate in 2004, instilled in her the belief that "the most meaningful work is that which benefits others" and "the principle that true satisfaction always comes from service to others." Ms. Mathai pointed out Africa's green competitive advantage – the youngest, fastest-growing workforce, abundant renewable energy potential, and critical raw materials.

The second recipient, Mr. Hugh Evans, co-founder of



Global Citizen, reflected on fighting extreme poverty and empowering people to take action on climate education and crises. Citing Nelson Mandela's view that poverty is man-made, he praised collective activism, dedicating the award to those building a just and peaceful world.

Mr. Patrick Awuah Jr., founder of Ashesi University in Ghana, was the third laureate. Leaving a successful U.S. tech career, he founded Ashesi to nurture ethical, entrepreneurial African leaders. He highlighted student-led initiatives fostering integrity and innovation.

The Founder's Award was presented to H.E. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, former Nigerian president, who in his acceptance speech remembered his humble beginnings in Nigeria's Niger Delta. "No dream is too big when driven by service and peace," he said.

Prophet Samuel Radebe, founder of The Revelation Spiritual Home, received the second Founder's Award. He stressed that true service endures hardship and opposition, praising the SHPP's values as a beacon for peacebuilders.

The SHPP focuses on honoring efforts for human development, conflict resolution and environment and is awarded biennially.



1 Left to right: Dr. Thomas Walsh, co-chair of the SHPP Committee, Ms. Wanjira Mathai, Mr. Hugh Evans, Mr. Patrick Awuah Jr.

2 Left to right: H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, Prophet Samuel Radebe

3 The ceremony was held at the Lotte Hotel World in Seoul, South Korea.

4 The Little Angels Dance Troupe provided entertainment for the ceremony.

## WORLD SUMMIT

# SUMMIT OPENING CEREMONY HONORS UNITED NATIONS' ANNIVERSARY

By Dirk Anthonis, UPF-USA

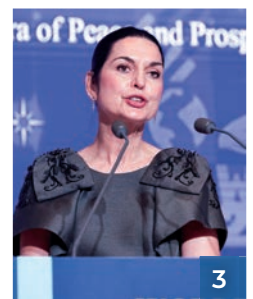
Under the title “Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations,” World Summit 2025 held its Opening Ceremony on April 11, with leaders from 117 nations exploring paths to global peace, stability and prosperity.

H.E. Philémon Yang, president of the UN General Assembly, per video message acknowledged the United Nations’ weaknesses but said that, “notwithstanding, we are not powerless. History has shown that nations united by resolve and common goals can embrace a brighter tomorrow.”

Madame Signe Zeikate, first lady of Costa Rica who grew up in Soviet-occupied Latvia, said, “Living through that history taught me what the true value of freedom, self-determination and the responsibility that we share to safeguard those principles mean.” She outlined how Costa Rica, her second home, illustrates what it means to “invest in peace.”

H.E. Boris Tadić, former president of Serbia, emphasized the priority of preventing wars and conflicts. “Whoever analyzes the activities of the United Nations can come to the conclusion that the global institution is much more focused on imposing peace than on preventing conflicts,” he said.

Former Speaker of the US House of Representatives Newt Gingrich praised the World Summit for uniting idealism with practicality. “It’s important to have leaders here who have led their countries, who’ve had to solve problems, who’ve had to win elections, who’ve had to actually govern. So you get a kind of a practical idealism here, not just ideas up in the clouds,” he said.



1 H.E. Philémon Yang, president of the UN General Assembly, sent a video message to the Summit.

2 H.E. Boris Tadić, president of Serbia (2004-2012)

3 Madame Signe Zeikate, first lady of Costa Rica and former economist at the World Bank

## CONCURRENT PROGRAMS

By Jacques Marion, president, UPF Europe and Middle East

The Forum of Presidents of Legislative Powers of Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico (FOPREL) held its 31st Extraordinary Meeting to discuss strategies for the implementation and harmonization of legislation among its nine member countries. FOPREL, which signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UPF in 2016, is in the process of granting UPF Observer Organization status with FOPREL.

Concurrently, presidents of parliament from some 40 countries held a series of sessions which culminated in the formation of the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers’ Conference (ISC). After greetings by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and a congratulatory video message from Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Secretary-General Martin Chungong, the parliament leaders elected Pakistan Senate President Youssouf Raza Gilani as leader of the new organization, which was launched at the Korean Parliament on April 12, 2025.



The Inaugural Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers’ Conference (ISC) was attended by parliamentary speakers and representatives from various countries across the globe.



The Forum of Presidents of Legislative Powers of Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico (FOPREL) held its 31st Extraordinary Meeting during World Summit 2025.



## WORLD SUMMIT

## PLENARY SESSION 1: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO WORLD ORDER

By Alan Sillitoe, UPF Europe and Middle East

Plenary Session 1 featured H.E. Luis Federico Franco Gómez, former president of Paraguay; H.E. Anthony Carmona, former president of Trinidad and Tobago; H.E. Filip Vujanović, former president of Montenegro; H.E. Dioncounda Traoré, former president of Mali; H.E. Dr. Nevers Mumba, former vice president of Zambia; Samdech Khuon Sudary, president of the National Assembly of Cambodia; and Hon. Ado El Hadj Abou, executive secretary of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Niger.

H.E. Vujanović called for urgent UN reform, questioning its current principles, decision-making mechanisms, and the composition of the Security Council. He highlighted ongoing global conflicts and mass migrations as evidence of the fragility of peace.

Hon. Sudary, president of the National Assembly of Cambodia, drew from Cambodia's transformation from conflict to development. She highlighted measures to prevent extremism and promote parliamentary diplomacy through the ten-pillar Peace Theory.

The session concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UPF and CEN-SAD, a regional organization representing 25 nations and governments across northern Africa.



H.E. Filip Vujanović,  
president, Montenegro  
(2006-2018)



Samdech Khuon Sudary,  
president, the National  
Assembly of Cambodia



An M.O.U. was signed between UPF, represented by its  
International Chairman Dr. Charles S. Yang, and Hon. Ado  
El Hadj Abou, representing CEN-SAD.

## PLENARY SESSION 2: VISION FOR AN ASIA PACIFIC UNION FORUM

By Gregory Stone, UPF Oceania

Building on a series of conferences held over the past year, most notably the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace conference hosted by the Cambodian National Assembly in November 2024, this session highlighted the recently launched Universal Peace Charter and focused on peace in Northeast Asia.

Representing Europe, Hon. Marek Krajčí, an MP from Slovakia, noted that the unresolved Korean conflict affects global stability, including Europe's, drawing a parallel to Slovakia's own history of division.

Dr. Niklas Swanström of the Institute for Security and Development Policy in Stockholm, Sweden, emphasized confidence-building measures and humanitarian engagement as pathways to circumvent political barriers.

H.E. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Jarwan, president of the



1 Hon Marek Krajčí, member of parliament, Slovakia

2 Dr. Niklas Swanström, executive director, Institute for Security  
and Development Policy, Sweden

3 H.E. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Jarwan, president, Global  
Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP)

Global Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP), addressed the surge in hate speech and fragmentation driven by greed. He stated that rebuilding trust requires a return to ethical principles, investing in people, strengthening bonds, and prioritizing shared human values.

## WORLD SUMMIT

## FIRST LADIES HIGHLIGHT WOMEN AS “BACKBONE OF SOCIETY” AND “BRIDGING DIVIDES”

By Mrs. Blessie Dhakal, international coordinator, IAFLP

In an upbeat and inspiring session hosted by the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), women in leadership underlined their role in fostering peace through dialogue instead of violence.

Madam Signe Zeikate, the first lady of Costa Rica, the oldest democracy in Latin America; Madam Fátima Vila Nova, first lady of São Tomé and Príncipe; Madam Ida Odinga, wife of the former prime minister of Kenya; Dame Patience Jonathan, former first lady of Nigeria; Madam Emilia

Patricia Alfaro de Franco, former first lady and senator of Paraguay; Madam Reema Harrysingh-Carmona, former first lady of Trinidad and Tobago; and Madam Shiranthi Rajapaksa, former first lady of Sri Lanka each spoke of their nations' progress when women offered their expertise with compassion, grace and conviction.

Mrs. Moriko Hori, president of the Women's Federation for World Peace; Dr. Julia H. Moon, general director of the Universal Ballet; and Dr. Samia Burton, co-chair of IAFLP-USA encouraged everyone to continue to inspire change on the path to a world of a “culture of heart.”



1 Madam Dr. Ida Odinga, wife of the prime minister of Kenya (2008-2013).

2 Mme. Fátima Vila Nova, first lady of São Tomé and Príncipe

3 Hon. Arenales Serrano Arguella, member of Senate, Spain



4 An interracial encounter representing the Ivory Coast and France during a “Bridge of Peace” ceremony

## RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR NATURE ALSO NEEDED TO SOLVE CLIMATE CRISES

By Kathleen Hwang, UPF-International

In the breakout session “Climate and Environment,” Dr. Sun Jin Moon, executive director of the organizing Hyo Jeong International Foundation for Environmental Peace, said, “The fundamental solution to environmental problems is based on elevating our consciousness and establishing harmonious relationships between humans and nature.”

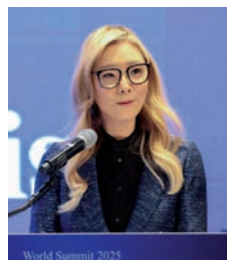
Dr. Cliff Davidson, director of the Center for Sustainable Engineering at Syracuse University, advocated developing a “circular economy” with a “reduce-reuse-recycle” approach, saying that industrial systems should be modeled on natural ecosystems, which are self-sustaining.

Dr. Arnaud Delorme, professor of neuroscience at the Paul Sabatier University in Toulouse, France, agreed that “a deeper transformation in how we see ourselves in relation to nature is necessary,” as city-dwellers are disconnected from nature and from each other.

H.E. Keeyong Chung, deputy minister for climate change

in South Korea, pointed out four “essential conditions for credible progress: market opportunity, global solidarity, technological innovation, and effective governance.”

H.E. Macky Sall, chair of the Supervisory Board of the Global Center on Adaptation and former president of Senegal, encouraged developed countries to support Africa's efforts to combat climate change.



Dr. Sun Jin Moon,  
executive director,  
HJ International  
Foundation for  
Environmental  
Peace



H.E. Keeyong  
Chung,  
deputy minister  
for climate  
change of the  
Republic of Korea



H.E. Macky Sall,  
president of  
Senegal (2012-  
2024)

## WORLD SUMMIT

## CHOOSE PEACE OR REMAIN DIVIDED: THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN GLOBAL COEXISTENCE AND PROSPERITY

From a report by UPF International

Pastors, religious leaders, American Clergy Leadership Conference participants and UPF leaders gathered for an Interfaith Prayer meeting hosted by the Korea Religious Association to discuss paths for mutual cooperation based on shared values. An overview video spoke of the only two options: religious cooperation or conflict.

Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan, former chair of the Lutheran World Federation, warned that religion should not be used as a political tool and said that God loves all people. "We need to educate people in acceptance of others. ... Recognize the face of God in all people. Then the dawn will break forth with reconciliation based on forgiveness."

Imboni Samuel Radebe of South Africa encouraged everyone to rise above dogmas and realize that true spirituality is what unites. Pastor Marcelo Diogenes da Silva of Brazil emphasized the need for the "theology of love." For this, he said, "the world needs a mother."

Pastor Paula-White Cain, spiritual advisor to President Donald Trump, in her congratulatory remarks via video praised the founder's vision "that it will take religious leaders to realize peace and to lead the way. ... This is your moment to speak out and to lead your community and to remind the world that peace begins in the family."



Paula White-Cain, spiritual advisor to President Donald J. Trump; president, Paula White Ministries, USA



Bishop Munib Younan, bishop emeritus, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land



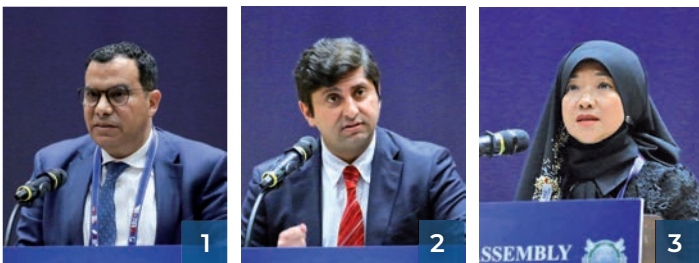
H.H. Baba Kalidas, chief priest, Shri Shivshakti Baba Kalidas Dham, India



Imboni Dr. Samuel Radebe, prophet of the Revelation Church of God, South Africa

## PARLIAMENTARIANS CONVENE AT KOREA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

By Alan Sillitoe, UPF Europe and Middle East



1 Hon. Ismail Benbeyi, member of Parliament, Morocco

2 Hon. Himanshu Gulati, member of Parliament, Norway

3 H.E. Ar. Siti Rozaimeryanty Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, secretary general, ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP)-participants highlighted the necessity of a global peace platform, emphasizing international unity as a priority as they respond to issues that threaten peace and hinder human development. They signed the "Peace Declaration of the World Summit 2025," which outlines the establishment of such a world peace coalition. In the declaration, they recognize the Korean Peninsula's peace and unification as crucial to global peace; value activities

promoting these goals; and propose transforming the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) into a global peace park and international peace space.

Despite the political turmoil in S. Korea, parliamentarians from both the ruling and opposition parties took the time to greet the international parliamentarians. Chung Dong-young offered a poignant perspective on the loss of human life, comparing each death to the vanishing of a small universe and expressing his belief that collective dreams of a world without war can become reality.

Na Kyung-won connected true peace in North Korea with human rights advancement. She expressed hope for finding genuine peace solutions for North Korea and creating new forms of peace amid rapidly shifting global dynamics.

Former US House Speaker Newt Gingrich highlighted the IAPP's importance as a forum in which countries can express their realities and collectively seek solutions to shared challenges.



## INTERNATIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SUMMIT 2025: A CALL FOR UNITY AND ACTION

Written by Peter Zoehrer, coordinator, International Media Association for Peace, Europe and Middle East



1 Left to right: Dr. Marco Respinti, editor in chief of the CESNUR journal *Bitter Winter*; lawyer Norishige Kondo of FFWPU Japan; international lawyer Tatsuki Nakayama; Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, co-chair of the summit; and Patricia Duval, an attorney and member of the Paris Bar specializing in international human rights law

2 Dr. Robert Řehák, chair, International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance

3 Hon. JD Vance, 50th vice president of the United States

The International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit 2025, to which UPF was a partner, brought together a diverse group of faith leaders, human rights advocates, policymakers, and NGOs, conservatives and liberals, in Washington, D.C., in February. IRF Summit Co-Founder Sam Brownback, a former U.S. ambassador-at-large for religious freedom, described it as “the largest religious freedom gathering in the world, ever.”

The summit’s discussions spanned multiple continents, with a particular focus on authoritarian repression, religious persecution in conflict zones, and the responsibilities of democratic nations in upholding religious freedom.

Speakers described the Chinese Communist Party’s suppression of Uyghur Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners, and Christians; Iran’s

ongoing persecution of Bahá’ís and Christian converts; and Russia’s suppression of religious groups in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

A special “Spotlight Africa” session underscored the growing crisis of religious violence across African nations, particularly in Nigeria, where extremist attacks against Christians and other groups have surged.

The summit also tackled religious freedom issues in democratic nations, such as Japan’s crackdown on the Unification Church (Family Federation for World Peace and Unification) following the 2022 assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Further, the intersection of religious freedom and humanitarian crises was noted.

## THE ERADICATION OF A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN JAPAN

By UPF Europe and Middle East

At a side-event on “Human Rights in Japan” at the UN Office at Geneva on June 16, 2025, in parallel with the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, experts condemned the Japanese government’s legal and societal treatment of the Unification Church (now Family Federation for World Peace and Unification), calling it a violation of human rights.

Dr. Hirohisa Koide gave a harrowing personal account of being abducted and forcibly confined by family members under the influence of anti-Unification Church activists and pastors. “I had no choice but to lie and say that I had renounced my faith,” he testified, describing physical abuse and psychological trauma during 10 months of captivity.

Attorney Patricia Duval criticized Japan’s systemic failure to protect adult religious freedom, noting that over 4,300 members were forcibly “deprogrammed.” She warned, “Most of the cases that were built against the Church ... have been fabricated” through coercion.



Left to right: Mr. Radomir Stantchev, president, FFWPU Switzerland; Mr. Norishige Kondo, deputy director, Legal Affairs Office, FFWPU Japan; Mrs. Patricia Duval, attorney and member of the Paris Bar specializing in international human rights law; Mr. Heiner Handschin, director, UPF Office for UN Relations, Geneva; Dr. Massimo Introvigne, managing director, CESNUR, Italy; Dr. Hirohisa Koide, medical doctor, Japan; Mr. Jacques Marion, president UPF EUME

Legal expert Norishige Kondo outlined flaws in the Tokyo court’s decision to dissolve the Church, based largely on speculative harm and outdated claims, while scholar Dr. Massimo Introvigne labeled the case “a legally sanctioned religicide,” pointing to a coordinated campaign by media and left-leaning lawyers.



## FOUNDERS' MESSAGE

## 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING: PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE



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What is now a temple, a world peace center arena, a hospital and a retreat for worldwide members began in the late 1960s when Dr. Sun Myung Moon searched Korea for land to dedicate as “holy ground” for future interdenominational peace projects.

After finding the Cheongpyeong area, Teacher Moon – as he then was called – started out in a tent while climbing the neighboring mountains and fishing on Cheongpyeong Lake to pray and offer devotion. For the first interdenominational pastors’ conference in July 1971, Teacher Moon personally broke the ground with a pickaxe and constructed a modest building together with his early disciples.

“In the future, Cheongpyeong will be the location of our global headquarters. You need to understand that this is true, because this is the final place in which I have offered conditions of devotion here in Korea,” he predicted on 5 August 1973.

1 UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her great-granddaughter Jeong-ah at the Gapyeong Begonia Bird Park

2 UPF co-founder Dr. Sun Myung Moon speaking to his early followers at Cheongpyeong Lake while the first buildings are being constructed

### Excerpts from a prayer by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, 8 May 2023

“I pray that the numerous efforts, resolutions, and actions that must be undertaken until we are restored to our original selves can be carried out proactively from now.

“We should remember that our responsibility living in this time is to find the way to correct all the wrongs of human history and restore the original environment that Heavenly Parent created.”



Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon with her grandsons Shin Chul (left) and Shin Heung at the inauguration of the Cheonwon Temple and Cheonil Sanctum

### The Cheonwon Temple



The Cheonwon Temple, a haven of peace among the mountains of South Korea's Gapyeong County

The Cheonwon Temple is a religious and cultural complex built mid-slope of a mountain overlooking a lake in Gapyeong, near Seoul, South Korea. The building is central to the vision of an ideal world – Cheonil-Guk in Korean – where individuals, families and nations align with divine principles to create conflict-free societies and where God's heart of love permeates all relationships, institutions and cultures.

The temple embodies the physical and cultural ideals of

interconnectedness, interdependence and living for the sake of one another, of mutual prosperity and universal values – in short, the vision of one human family under God.

It serves as headquarters for the Unification movement, housing administrative offices, worship facilities, educational spaces, and ceremonial halls. It is designed to be a hub for spiritual connection, governance, and the cultivation of a peaceful culture, for creativity, learning and the arts, with space for world-class exhibitions, events and interdisciplinary exchanges.

Within Cheonwon Temple is the Cheonil Sanctum, a spiritual core where individuals can offer prayers and devotion, deepening their connection with the Divine.

## REGIONAL NEWS

## UPF CZECHIA: 75 YEARS SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF THE KOREAN WAR

By Dr. Juraj Lajda, president, UPF Czech Republic



Alex Švamberg discussed many details of the Korean War and its aftermath.

At the Prague Peace Embassy in June, Alex Švamberg, a Czech journalist and commentator, spoke in detail about the Korean War and its aftermath. Mr. Švamberg referred to anecdotes and diaries of his father, who was a member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC)

in Korea. This commission has been responsible for monitoring compliance with the terms of the armistice, and consists of representatives from Czechoslovakia and Poland (selected by North Korea and China) and Sweden and Switzerland (selected by the UN).

Koreans in 1945 welcomed the end to 40 years of Japanese colonization, but were disheartened by the division of their country into North and South. While the background to the outbreak of war in 1950 is complex, Mr. Švamberg indicated that it could have been avoided.

In March, the Czech UPF hosted an event titled "Korea – The Promised Land?" The speaker discussed "the miracle on the Han River" – South Korea's unprecedented political, economic and social development and rise from the ashes of the Korean War toward the end of the century.

## UPF-FRANCE: THE HISTORY OF KOREAN THOUGHT IN LIGHT OF THE 21ST CENTURY

By Mr. Jacques Marion, president, UPF France

How did the small Korean Peninsula—divided after World War II, devastated by war, and marked by millions of casualties—manage to become a leading cultural and technological power, captivating young people around the world with its music, cinema, and innovations?

This question was at the core of Dr. Olivier Bailblé's presentation at a UPF event in Paris, France, in June. As senior lecturer in Korean Studies in the Department of Asian Studies at Aix-Marseille University, he dove into Korea's historical foundations, as nearly 100 people participated in person and online.

He traced the major stages in the development of Korean

civilization, shaped by Buddhist and Confucian traditions inherited from China, yet enriched by a distinctly Korean identity and original philosophical thought.

He highlighted the period of Mongol occupation, during which Korean monks reaffirmed their spiritual and historical roots, forging a unique national consciousness through myths and collective memory. He described the creation of the unique Hangul alphabet in the 15th century – and, in the 19th century, the gradual integration of Eastern philosophy with Christian ideas, which, combined with the deeply resilient and creative Korean spirit, enabled the nation to overcome the trials of Japanese colonization and the Korean War.



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1 Dr. Olivier Bailblé, senior lecturer in Korean Studies in the Department of Asian Studies at Aix-Marseille University, addresses the audience.

2 Nearly 100 participants attended the event, either in person or online.



## REGIONAL NEWS

## PEACE CUP SOCCER GAMES FOR CHILDREN TEACH RESPECT, LOYALTY, TEAM SPIRIT

By Seraina Termine, UPF-Ticino

Twelve teams of children aged 10 and 11 years – nine teams from Switzerland and three from Italy, 150 players in total – met in the town of Novazzano near the border with Italy, for the 12th annual Peace Cup soccer games.

In partnership with a local soccer club, UPF-Ticino organized the tournament with the support of Swiss UPF members traveling from afar to help out. Friends from the local soccer association provided referees and managed logistics, including kitchen, first aid, parking guidance, and technical support. An impressive crowd of cheering spectators filled the stands.

A Peace Ambassador award was bestowed on the logistics coordinator, Mr. Roberto Meneghetti. Although now retired from sports, he said, “For the Peace Cup, I shall do everything I can!”

Mr Giuseppe Termine, chairman of UPF-Ticino, explained: “We are celebrating not only sport but above all the values that sport teaches us: respect, loyalty, commitment, and team spirit. The Peace Cup was born with this spirit, to remind us that, more important than victory, is the way we play, behave, and relate to others.”



The game was quite focused and intense.



The 2025 Peace Cup champions

## RECLAIMING BUZOVNA ROCKS AS AN AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL MONUMENT

By Seyfulla Azər (Seyfulla Heybətov), UPF Azerbaijan



1



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1 After clearing sacks of debris from the beach, volunteers show certificates of appreciation for their community service that they received from an NGO, backed by the Ministry of Youth.

2 Seyfulla Azər (left), with his daughter and neighbor, holds a certificate of appreciation for service in leading the restoration of Buzovna Rocks.

The Absheron Peninsula, a semi-desert region near the capital, Baku, boasts scenic sandy shores and rocky formations. It includes Buzovna village, where a two-kilometer rocky ridge along the Caspian Sea hosts diverse wildlife. Although Azerbaijani law protects the coastline as public property, local officials and wealthy individuals began illegally seizing these rocks after the 1990s. By April 2022, only 100 meters remained accessible.

Seyfulla Azər, an environmental activist and UPF member, was shocked by new fences on the grounds. He filmed a social media appeal and organized a first community cleanup event. Local residents joined, and a petition was

delivered to the presidential administration. In June 2022, the president ordered the illegal structures to be demolished, freeing most of the area. Activists pushed for official protection, and in May 2024 the Buzovna Rocks were declared a natural monument.

Weekly cleanups continue, with 72 events reclaiming 80 percent of the territory. Seyfulla and other activists remain determined to fully restore and protect the rocks as a symbol of responsible nature conservation. “The Buzovna Rocks are our heritage, our home, and we must protect them,” Seyfulla says.



## REGIONAL NEWS

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK 2025

*In 2010, the United Nations designated the first week of February as World Interfaith Harmony Week. From the outset, UPF has actively supported this initiative, both at the United Nations and as observed by UPF chapters around the world. Below are a few representative programs organised by the Europe and Middle East branch of UPF to celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week 2025.*



*Czech Republic: In the Czech Republic, UPF held its celebration at the Chapel of the Community of Christians in Prague in the presence of Hon. Nina Nováková, a member of Parliament; Dr. Robert Řehák, special representative for Holocaust and Religious Dialogue and Freedom of Religion; and numerous religious leaders.*



*Finland: UPF-Finland held a gathering in its new Peace Center with the theme "Toward Harmony in the Human Family."*



*Slovakia: With the conviction that all people of faith should pay special attention to the work of the Creator, UPF Slovakia hosted a program titled "The Creator – Mother Earth – Spirituality – The Sacredness of Nature."*



*UK – Birmingham: Around 140 people of different faiths, cultures, races, ages and social backgrounds gathered in the Prayer Hall of the Al Mahdi Institute in Selly Oak, Birmingham, UK.*



*Denmark: UPF-Denmark held a meaningful event in conjunction with the European Network Against Racism, the Church of Scientology, and the not-for-profit organization United for Human Rights.*



*France: The French chapter of UPF organized a gathering in Paris under the sponsorship of Monseigneur Nicolas of the Independent Orthodox Church of Nations in St. Joseph parish.*



*UK – London: At the UPF-UK headquarters, the program titled "Pathways to Peace: Interfaith Collaboration for a Better World" was filled with profound insights and meaningful grassroots interfaith activities, fostering greater understanding and harmony among faith communities.*



## REGIONAL NEWS

## INTERRELIGIOUS COOPERATION – HUMAN FRATERNITY AND A CULTURE OF PEACE

*Written by Editorial Team, UPF-Italy*

Interreligious dialogue, the crucial role of women in mediation, and the family as a social model were emphasized at a joint celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week and International Day of Human Fraternity. At the meeting in the Italian Senate, messages of peace from Islamic, Christian, Buddhist and Jewish traditions stressed individual responsibility in promoting mutual respect and understanding.

Sen. Pier Ferdinando Casini, a former president of the National Assembly, recalled the significance of Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib signing the Document on Human Fraternity – a fundamental step toward building a fairer and more united society – in February 2019.

Thenzin Khentse, a Tibetan Buddhist monk, stressed the art of loving as it is communicated through gazes, physical contact, and presence, even before words.



*The speakers and audience in the Italian Senate*

The Right Rev. Luis Miguel Perea Castrillón, bishop of the Anglican Church of Europe, spoke about the need to recognize what unites us: goodwill and the desire to progress together, seeing the other as a true brother or sister. He conceded that this is neither easy nor obvious, but it is possible.

The event provided a welcome opportunity for exchange and dialogue among different faiths and people.

## UPF-AUSTRIA: WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK CELEBRATED FOR THE 13TH YEAR

*Written by Peter Haider, president, UPF-Austria*

The conference at the International Center of the United Nations in Vienna titled “Harmony among Religions and Cultures – A Precondition for World Peace” brought



*First panel, left to right: Min. plen. Alexander Rieger; Dr. Afsar Rathor; H.E. Mohammed Sameer Salem Hindawi; Dr. Hassan Mohiuddin Qadri; Mr. Peter Haider*



*Second panel, left to right: Ms. Tatev Mnatsakanyan; Prof. Dr. Elmar Kuhn; Ms. Marlies Ladstätter; Bishop Humphrey Sarfaraz Peters; Dr. Marie Therese Igrec; Dr. Androniki Barla; Mr. Peter Haider*

together Muslims, Christians and the Austrian Foreign Ministry to promote genuine grassroots dialogue. The conference featured voices from education, the arts, and youth.

Jordanian Ambassador H.E. Mohammed Hindawi pointed out that Jordanian King Abdullah II initiated World Interfaith Harmony Week in 2010 precisely in order to strengthen dialogue as a tool to enable freedom of religion.

Professor Dr. Elmar Kuhn, president of the Coalition of Faith-Based Organisations Europe, stated: “As people of faith, it is up to us to demonstrate the power of dialogue and compromise in our societies. Let us, as religions, exemplify what our societies need most: the ability to dialogue.”

Ms. Caroline Hungerländer of the Institute for Environment, Peace, and Development commented: “Perhaps harmony does not mean the absence of any conflict but rather the ability to manage differences without resorting to violence or oppression. ... Perhaps, in addressing the great challenges of the 21st century, cooperation – despite differences – must be the goal, not only between religions but also among the people of faith who uphold them.”

UN DAYS

## UN INTERNATIONAL DAYS CELEBRATED ACROSS EUROPE



UPF-Albania, in cooperation with the Tirana Regional Peace Council, held a special event that emphasized the role of parenthood and the spiritual legacy that comes from the core values of the family.



For World Environment Day, UPF-UK held a panel discussion and Q&A session on this year's theme of beating plastic pollution.



UPF-Austria, together with the Iranian Wisdom House Vienna and other partners, organized a conference addressing the topic of "Family-Oriented Policies for Sustainable Development."



To commemorate World Water Day, UPF-Slovakia invited Radovan Dobrovodský, a member of ALLATRA Climate Change and Technologies, to speak about new technologies for safe recycling which can help restore the balance of the oceans.



On the occasion of Mother Earth Day, UPF-Berlin invited Christine Kansy from lovepeaceharmony.org to speak about soul wisdom and soul healing.



UPF and IMAP Italy held a webinar on the theme "Mass Media and Family: Between Consumption and Representation."



## UN DAYS

## THE FAMILY – CENTER OF LIFE OR A PATRIARCHAL CONSTRUCT?

By Hildegard Piepenburg, UPF-Germany



Clockwise from top left: Christoph Lindemann, Christian Haubold, Karl-Christian Hausmann, and Sylvia Pantel

In honor of two United Nations days – International Day of Families and Global Day of Parents – UPF-Germany’s “Peace Talks” webinar series in May featured a politician and a religious leader who stand up for the value of the family.

Sylvia Pantel, a former member of the German parliament, lamented the lack of choice for mothers, as politicians of all governing parties focus on the full-time employment of women and on institutional childcare. Instead of strengthening the role of parents, there is a “very big attack against marriage and family at all levels.” As managing director of the Foundation for Family Values, she works to reverse the government’s many attempts to replace parents.

Christoph Lindemann, community leader of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in the town of Giessen, spoke about the family from psychological, philosophical and theological points of view. “Peace begins in the family, where a culture of the heart is built up in a very practical way, without ideology,” Mr. Lindemann said. Even if the family can be a source of pain, it remains deeply anchored in our souls as a place of longing. Family relationships can help us to experience and learn trust, responsibility and reconciliation, he said.

## UPF-UK: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES AND GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS

By Robin Marsh, secretary general, UPF-United Kingdom



Dr. David Hanna, former UPF North Region president, gives his presentation.

Families from diverse backgrounds came together in London in May to honor the vital role of parents and families in building peaceful communities.

Dr. David Hanna, former UPF North Region president, explored the concept of marriage across different cultures. The event featured practical wisdom from family life experts including Mr. Stephen Stacey, author of *The Seven Principles of Creation: Marriage Enrichment Workbook*. A humorous video by Mr. Mark Gungor provided a light-hearted perspective on marital dynamics. Dr. Wali Islam, a founding global vice president of Sun Moon University



The speakers and participants of the conference

and one of UPF’s earliest Ambassadors for Peace, offered family insights from the Quran. Khalil Gibran’s poem “On Marriage” was read, and musical pieces were performed.

A highlight of the event was the Interfaith Peace Blessing Ceremony, in which couples rededicated their marriages and invited God to be at the heart of their family life. Also, Exemplary Family Awards were presented to outstanding UK families, who in turn offered personal insights into the values that sustain their family bonds, with contributions from multiple generations.

## INTERNATIONAL

# PARLIAMENTARY INTERFAITH CONFERENCE IN ROME

By Mr. Jacques Marion, president, UPF Europe and Middle East

Organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in partnership with the Italian Chamber of Deputies, the Italian Senate, and the NGO Religions for Peace, the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue was held at the seat of the Italian Chamber of Deputies in Rome's Palazzo Montecitorio from June 19 to 21, 2025, on the theme "Strengthening Trust and Embracing Hope for Our Common Future."

General debate focused on the theme "Parliamentarians in Dialogue with Religion and Belief: Strengthening Trust and Embracing Hope for Our Common Future," and working sessions discussed topics such as peaceful coexistence; the rights of religious minorities; ethical leadership; education

for peace; interfaith dialogue; and the inclusion of women in public life.

Conference participants were invited to a special audience in the Vatican, where Pope Leo XIV addressed them, urging them to view political service as a noble form of charity rooted in truth, justice, and the common good.

The Pope emphasized three key responsibilities for political leaders: promoting the common good, especially defending the marginalized; safeguarding religious freedom through interfaith dialogue; and grounding decisions in natural law as a shared ethical foundation.



Tanzania Speaker and IPU International President Dr. Tulia Ackson gives the final remarks, with Hon. Pier Ferdinando Casini, president, IPU Italy, looking on.



IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong



Dr. Tageldin Hamad, president, UPF International, addresses the conference.

Dr. Tulia Ackson:

"We convened this conference because we see pain in the world, division in society, and our role as parliamentarians is to work toward a better world. Despite our differences and difficulties, we need to say yes to dialogue, or else we will lose the foundation of our humanity."

Martin Chungong:

"Parliaments ... need to reach out to a whole ecosystem of stakeholders around them – and religion and belief leaders and organizations are a key piece of that puzzle."

Dr. Tageldin Hamad:

"True peace cannot be imposed from above or demanded from below – it must be cultivated through trust and rooted in our common spiritual and moral values."

## UPF Europe & Middle East Newsletter

Visit [www.eume.upf.org/nl18](http://www.eume.upf.org/nl18) for the complete reports.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

16 October	Conference with women and religious leaders
24 October	United Nations Day
19-20 November	Conference on Balkans, European Parliament
25 November	Elimination of Violence Against Women & Girls, UK Parliament (Date TBC)
10 December	UN Human Rights Day

See the calendar of events at  
[www.eume.upf.org/agenda/events](http://www.eume.upf.org/agenda/events)