

The Peacebuilders

"Keeping the ICF Circle informed; Connecting with Community of Interreligious Peacebuilders"

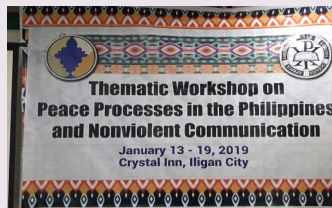
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ICF held a Tri-People Thematic Workshop in Mindanao

The Tri-People Thematic Workshop on Peace Processes, and Nonviolent Communication was held on January 13-19, 2019 at Crystal Inn, Barangay San Miguel, Iligan City in the Philippines. Sixteen participants – Christians, Muslims and a Lumad came. SoP 2018 alumni Baidido Saganding and Mohaimen Arba provided leadership in team building activities and closing ritual, along with Dunhill Maraya and Eugene Jamandron. The topics



taken up were Understanding the Roots of YMCA, its Mission and the Role of APAY and ICF; The Nodal Points and Gains of the stalled GRP-NDFP Peace Talks, The Fruit of the GRP-MILF Peace Talks: Bangsamoro Organic Law; and Nonviolent Communication.

ICF Coordinator Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro challenged participants, especially those from YMCA, to be mindful of the history, the mission-oriented roots of YMCA principles as they are the next generation of leaders that will chart the path of the local organizations.

The peace talks between the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is now stalled. Yet, important achievements and

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APAY and ICF Reps attended Peace Conference

Nam Boo Won, general secretary of APAY and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, ICF Coordinator attended the 7th Annual Peace Practitioners Research Conference held at Apsara Palace Resort and Conference Center in Siem Reap on December 6-7, 2018. Organized by the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies led by Emma Leslie, presentations and discussions revolved around the theme, "Peacebuilding Begins in the midst of Crisis." One hundred eighty partici-

pants from Asia, USA, and Europe listened to discussants and to each other, shared experiences, made new friends and reconnected with old friends in the peace networks.

The keynote presenters both came from government organizations and non-government organizations. The conference was an avenue for the students of CPCS, peace activists and advocates to present their research outputs and case studies.



Two Koreans gave their view and updates on the peace process in the Korean Peninsula. Nam Boo Won, APAY general secretary, gave the South Korean perspective, while O Ryong Il, a member of the Presidium, the Korean National Peace Committee gave the North Korean perspective.

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ICF held a Tri-People Thematic Workshop in Mindanao

"it has been proven that violence is reduced when there are peace talks going on."

-- Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro

nodal points of the talks must be highlighted. Ms. Ofel Cantor of the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) presented these points and the gains. The participants read and discussed the documents agreed upon and signed by the GRP and NDFP peace panels. At the end of the day, the participants saw the urgency of calling both parties to resume the peace talks.

The topic on the fruits of the peace process between

the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was very timely. The peace process gave rise to the formulation of Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The facilitator, Tirmizy Abdullah, SoP alumnus, now an assistant professor at Mindanao State University brought the participants back to the beginnings of the story and struggle of the Moro people. This

served as a backdrop to understand

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Studying the Agreements signed by the GRP and NDFP Peace Panels

APAY and ICF Reps attended . . .

Both speakers expressed joy over the positive results of the peace accord between North and South Korea. They articulated their hopes that peace will flourish in a One-Korean nation.

To many participants, the development of the Korean

Peninsula is inspiring. Peace is truly possible. It only takes a lot of political will and commitment on the part of the countries' leaders and support of all sectors to forge a genuine and lasting peace.

✂ ✂ ✂



The Peace Practitioners Research Conference Participants
Photo by Miku Lagarde



Mr. Nam Boo Won



Mr. O Ryong Il

Shanti Nepal held Follow-Up Training for SoP Alumni

Shanti Nepal initiated a Follow-Up Training Initiative for the friends and alumni of the ICF's School of Peace (SoP) on 8-10 February 2019 in Birendranagar, Surkhet, the capital city of the Karnali Province. Out of the 14 participants, 10 were male and 4 were female. Six of the participants were SoP alumni, namely: Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman, Umesh



KC, Rabindra Kumar Chand, Srijana Shahi, Shreeram Chaudhary, and Bibek Kumar Shahi. This program

was supported by the Small Grant given by Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), a project of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY).

The Training began with Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman facilitating the introduction of the participants. The secretary of Shanti Nepal, Bibek Shahi gave the words of welcome, and

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ICF held a Tri-People Thematic Workshop in Mindanao

the contemporary issues faced by the Moro people in general, and the struggle of the Maranaw people in particular, who are displaced from their homeland Marawi. This helped the participants gain new insights into the situation in Mindanao.



Participants at the entrance of Ground Zero

Ms. Amina Mambuay facilitated Nonviolent Communication, along with Nathaniel Mambuay. The workshop challenged the participants to learn and practice a way of communicating that does not lead to violence both to self and others. Based on Marshall Rosenberg's principles, the participants were urged to distinguish and communicate their observations, feelings, needs, and request. The participants expressed that NVC is needed as basic in the peace processes and social discourses, but also especially in relationships at home, and in the workplace.

The group traveled to Marawi City, visited temporary shelter areas, and traversed along the abandoned roads of the city. They witnessed the devastation of the once-

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Shanti Nepal held Follow-Up Training ...

Shreeram Chaudhary, as chair of the organization, introduced the nature and work of Shanti Nepal.

The sessions started with prayers. Umesh KC led the first-morning prayer by chanting the Gayatri Mantra, a mantra that has an incisive impact on the mind and body. On the second day Rubina Kathun, from the Muslim community, led the morning prayer focusing on endurance in work.

Bibek facilitated the section where participants shared updates about their life and work. Rabi Chand works as a consultant for a local agency and was involved in disaster management planning and governance in Surkhet. Where he works, Rabi noted that peace education is needed.

Umesh KC is doing great as a public speaking coach. He uses school vacation time to give orientation to community children on environmental issues. He also shared experience in using peace education that he learned in Indonesia.

Working as a freelancer, Mohammad has been involved with SoP alumni forum since 2012, although he became SoP alumni only in 2017. He actively volunteers with Nepal Red Cross Society since his childhood, and now serves as vice president of NRCS sub-chapter in Ghumkhahare, Surkhet. Currently, an online newspaper employs him as a writer on various social issues.

Srijana Shahi is a teacher and founder of Gurukul Montessori School with 10 years of experience in related field. She makes use of peace educa-



The group in Kakrebihar

tion in nurturing the children to overcome conflict situations and impart positive thoughts especially during different occasions like Christmas day, festival Dashain, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha.

Part of the activity was the visit to the historical place in Surkhet like Kakrebihar and Deuti Bajjai, among others. The participants learned once more that every gathering is a teaching-learning opportunity not just from fellow human beings, but also from nature.

Facilitated by Shreeram

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Receiving of certificates of participation from Bibek Shahi

ICF Alumni Feature: Her New Life Beyond the Hijab

Note: ICF uses the term "alumni" in an inclusive sense. Thus, this section is dedicated to feature one who went through any of the ICF programs such as School of Peace, Peace Institute (formerly mini-SoP), or even a thematic workshop. ❧ ❧

"My good works, feelings, emotions, my generosity, my favor, my kind thoughts for unity, on the holy spirit, on my soul, are not limited or bounded by the Hijab. All these are in the heart."

-Umi Farida

Umi Farida



According to the 2011 statistic, 87.18 percent of the total population of the population in Indonesia practice Islam. Indonesia is recognized as a Muslim country. This is where social activist and a political leader, Umi Farida comes from.

Farida was born into a conservative Muslim family and community that dutifully follow their religious practices. Her parents sent her to the Islamic Boarding School when she was 14, as her father has a responsibility to preserve the Islamic culture. After secondary school, the Islamic boarding school as compulsory. In the boarding school, she took the obligatory Islamic education with the Maulana, Imam, or guardian. Farida says she has suffered a lot in her life. She pointed out that even if the people belong to different religions, different faiths, and different culture, our commonality is our humanity. I agree with her, that when a baby is born, the baby does not have a religion. The baby is socialized by the family's cultural and religious systems.

In college, her classmate, a Wahabi (one kind of Muslim group), taught her to wear the burka and not to associate with men. But she wore hijab twenty-four hours a day. Then she got friends who had dynamic views about their Islamic faith. They raised questions as they studied the Qur'an and the

Hadith. Why are women forced to accept all orders by the husband? Why is it compulsory to wear hijab? If it is true that Muhammad said the hijab is used to distinguish between a prostitute and a good woman, how sensible is it? And if it was practical to wear hijab in the Arabian countries because of its hot climate, why is it forced upon women in Indonesia when the climate is different?

Umi Farida noted that women wearing hijab had difficulty finding a job in contemporary times. In this case, how can a poor woman survive without a job? She asserted that one must give primary importance to human life than tradition. She also pointed out that a single woman also has difficulty finding a place to live in and stay. "If I cover myself with a burka or a hijab, I cannot have a job. I will be like a frog inside the well or a prisoner in jail. How will I survive?" Farida asked. She believes that everyone has equal rights and freedom as human beings. She holds that Hazrat Muhammad Salallahu Alaihi Wasallalam has given honor to women, and does not interfere with individual freedom. She does not care what people think, for she does not believe that wearing a hijab or burka determines the quality and nature of the person behind it.

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Shanti Nepal held Follow-Up Training . . .

Chaudhary, the participants did brainstorming and workshop on conceiving a new project and giving it a name that is inclusive of caste, race, and religion. The participants put their heads together in coming up with a project framework. There was a lot of learning from this training and look forward to creating a successful proposal.

To end the meeting and to appreciate the efforts and attendance of those who came, the officers of Shanti Nepal gave certificates to all the participants. ❧ ❧ ❧

-by Mohammad Ayatulla Rahaman
School of Peace Alumni 2017
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SoP 2018 Alumnus participated in ToT as Facilitator

Alumnus of SoP 2018 and Education senior student, Hein Thura Htet joined the Team YPI (Youth Peace Initiative) along with student union of Sagaing University of Education as a facilitator in training student-teachers. The student-trainees were expected to be facilitators during the Peace Tour. The Peace tour aims to spread the seeds of peace, focusing on peace education and the role of teachers in peacebuilding. The activity was participated by nine colleges across Upper Myanmar on January 7-11, 2019,



the second week of the year. The tour was endorsed by the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education.

On January 23, 2019, he also

made a presentation to the university students his experiences, knowledge and skills gathered during the School of Peace held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from October to November, 2018. ❧ ❧ ❧



Umi Farida: Her New Life Beyond the Hijab



"Women in Black:" A Campaign to Protest against Rape. Umi Farida with (R) Tri Astuti, Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, and Nina Nayoan (L). Photo taken during a thematic workshop in Timor Leste in August 2018.

She further argued: "My good works, feelings, emotions, my generosity, my favor, my kind thoughts for unity, on the holy spirit, on my soul, are not limited or bounded by the Hijab. All these are in the heart."

She believed that Islam teaches people to make good relations with people, cultivate respect for self and others, and to live in harmony, unity, and peace together. The hijab has nothing to do with it. So she left the hijab, especially after joining the School of Peace in Bangalore, India. She went through many pains and struggles in life, but she continues to

find strength in her faith tradition. Finally, her parents understood her. Now, she is charting her future. She wants to pursue her interest in politics. As I listened to her, I saw her bright smile, and I told her: "Boldness is a source of success." ❧ ❧

By Mohammad Ayatulla
Rahaman; SOP Alumni 2017,
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Reflections Corner: From the Participants of the Thematic Workshop-Philippines

#Marawi, I am with You!

Marawi is
proof of how
intolerance
can turn into
violence and
how
violence can
destroy
humanity.

--Adrianne John
A. Nuñez

Almost two years had passed since the Marawi siege happened. The massive devastation that has been done to Marawi and its people was very much palpable as I stood from the peripheries of ground zero. It is very hard to put into words the horrors that I saw - totally damaged, bullet-ridden houses, business establishments, and places of worship. It was appalling, to say the least. The once vibrant Islamic city is so long gone. What is left are tall grasses, thick vines, and the eerie silence of the ruins.

It was a big opportunity for me to visit Marawi, to see the situation up close, and to

hear the narratives of the people. Unlike the waters of the Agus River that surround the city center, serene, continually flowing, and full of life, the Maranaws struggle to rebuild their lives due to the lack of genuine support from the government. Thousands of displaced people have the right to safe and dignified return back to their homes back.

Marawi is proof of how intolerance can turn into violence and how violence can destroy humanity. Misunderstandings and greed for power have caused such tragedy. But, it is not only about the perpetrators. Lis-

ten to the clamor of our Maranao brothers and sisters who go back and reconstruct their homes and city. Marawi is for the Maranaws and Maranaws alone, not for the profit-seeking actors. It is their home and the ground of their identity. They have their own culture and history - an ongoing one - that we, Filipinos, must protect from being stolen again. 🙏 🙏 🙏



By Adrianne John A. Nuñez
Youth, Davao YMCA

Peace Process, Nonviolent Communication and Peacebuilding

"People have the right to a safe and dignified return," said historian Prof. Tirmizy Abdullah of Mindanao State University.

"Conflict is everywhere. . . When needs are not met and people's perspectives clash, conflict erupts. When not resolved, conflict may result in violence. Violence is a callous act and if not mediated, may result in a massive breakdown," said Adrianne John Nuñez of Davao YMCA.

As seen in the Marawi siege, violence is deadly. But we can resist violence in our own ways. One of the most effective and well-tested methods in preventing violence is by practicing nonviolent communication. Nonviolent communication, in a simpler sense, is a process that involves language, thoughts, and communication. It is another means of achieving peace through peaceful dialogue and un-

derstanding the story from the ground.

The thematic workshop on peace processes in the Philippines and nonviolent communication organized in Iligan City on January 13-19, 2019 was insightful. Dr. Muriel Orevillo Montenegro, ICF Coordinator said there is a need to call for the resumption of peace talks in Mindanao, "because it has been proven that violence is reduced when there

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Peace Process, Nonviolent Communication and . . .

are peace talks."

Prof. Tirmizy Abdullah of Mindanao State University said the initiative is to bring more young people -Muslims, Christians and Indigenous People - together in safe places for engagement and sharing of their stories. "We need to move from tolerance into engagement and understanding. More safe spaces bring young people together." He hoped that the Bangsamoro Organic Law will be ratified peacefully, and his hope was realized. He called on the youth and all to stop the external forces that to create the picture of that Christians and Muslims should fight in Mindanao.

A participant, and a senior Divinity School student, Divillajyn Ursos, said: "Non-violence starts within us, like the Jackal and Giraffe." Jackal and Giraffe



exercise is an activity to practice non-violent communication. These two animals have extremely different attitudes: Jackal is violent while Giraffe is the opposite. For non-violent communication to happen, one must take the Giraffe stance if a Jackal attacks to keep the peace. But it does not mean one will forever be a Giraffe. There will be times when one also needs to take the Jackal

stance especially when injustice is involved.

In our current chaotic world, do not be jackals. Be a giraffe, one who sees problems through different lenses. Living our life with compassion will make our world a place where violent conflicts will no longer exist - only peace.. 🦒 🦒 🦒

- by Eugene Jamandron
Siaton, Negros Oriental
BS Mass Communication 2018



ICF held a Tri-People Thematic Workshop in Mindanao



Bullet-ridden Masjid in Marawi

a-beautiful Islamic city. There, they listened to accounts of people who witnessed the siege of Marawi. They interacted with the youngest female Barangay Captain (village chief). She told her story as an internally displaced person (IDP) and echoed her people's longing to go back to their homes in Ground Zero. The group also visited the Aga Khan Museum of Islamic Arts inside Marawi State University.

The debriefing session emotionally loaded. Everybody cried, literally. A Maguindanaoan participant shared how the memory of the siege flashed back to her mind. She was in Marawi preparing for her professional board examinations. She recalled her harrowing experience of finding ways to escape, refusing to leave behind her other Muslim and Christian classmates. Some participants expressed that while they experienced being displaced as evacuees in Mindanao, they were able to come home after some time, unlike the Maranaws, who are not allowed to go back to rebuild their homes and lives. Instead, they languished in temporary shelters that are congested, without water and without livelihood activities.

The five-day workshop ended with a ritual, where the participants ex-

pressed commitment to work for peace and unity among peoples – Muslims, Christians, and Lumads. To make the feelings lighter, the group proceeded to visit the beautiful Maria Cristina Falls, a waterfall of Agus River, and whose power is harnessed to provide electricity to the whole island of Mindanao. The group visited the Dansalan College extension in Iligan. Dansalan's main campus in Marawi was burned on the second day of the siege, and some of its staff were held hostage by the Maute group. On their own initiative, the participants continued sharing their stories of pains and joys deep into the night until the wee hours of the morning, crying and laughing together in solidarity with each other and with the suffering people of the country. 🦒 🦒 🦒

The Korean Peninsula Peace Process: A perspective from people's movement towards peacebuilding and reunification

Note: Due to limited space, this speech delivered by Nam Boo Won, APAY General Secretary, on Dec. 6, 2018 during 7th PPRC in Siem Reap is edited.

Peace is truly possible. It only takes a lot of political will and commitment on the part of the countries' leaders and support of all sectors to forge a genuine and lasting peace.

As you know, the pivotal issue at the moment is what must proceed between "de-nuclearization of North Korea" and "security guarantee by the US to DPRK". After the unexpectedly rapid development of the relationship among the three countries, it seems this is a time for deep breaths toward the next step. Now, the highest obstacle to materializing the agreements is the US-led as well as bilateral "sanctions" geared towards "Maximum Pressure."

I bring to you a perspective derived from people's movement towards peacebuilding and reunification of the divided nation. This perspective informs the need to place the recent development towards peacebuilding and reconciliation into a wider historical context in which Korean people went through a long and perseverant journey/struggle towards national independence.

... we need to build and strengthen a regional as well as global network among peace activists and peace movements with a view to creating a "global peace force" to forge strong solidarity and mutual support on the peacebuilding efforts/movements in a more strategic way.

I must admit that the performance of President Moon Jae-In of South Korea, particularly on the relationship with North Korea, was beyond my expectation. He is genuinely pushing forward the peacebuilding process on the Korean Peninsula by engaging proactively with DPRK and USA. Yet, his political and diplomatic achievements would not have been possible if there had been no reciprocal response from Chairman Kim Jong-un of DPRK as well as from Trump regardless of his motivation.

Mr. Moon's presidency was definitely the outcome of the Korean people's candle-light revolution, after the impeachment of then-president Park Geun-Hye. Thus, President Moon has heavy political debt and moral obligation to the people of the candle-vigil, who voted for him with high expectation towards social reform, rebuilding social justice, peacebuilding in the Korean Peninsula. We are concerned that the reactionary, conservative, right-wing move symbolized by the "National Flag Army" can, at any time, destabilize the gains of the peace process. In other words, the reform-oriented force symbolized by President Moon is vulnerable the possible maneuvers by the conservative, right-wing forces and their representative political parties. For this reason, maintaining and strengthening the reform-oriented people's force cannot be overemphasized. Without continuous backing and support by the candle-light vigil force, President Moon might lose his political legitimacy as well as the momentum to push forward his initiatives for peacebuilding and reconciliation with North Korea.

The Korean Peninsula peace movement must also be viewed in a broader historical and geopolitical context. Recently, the Korean peace movement has clearly indicated where the "niche" is if we really want to untie the entangled knot of the dominant—"status quo," which is maintained by global

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The Korean Peninsula Peace Process: A perspective from. . .

superpowers. If we could achieve a meaningful progress in peacebuilding in the Korean Peninsula, the last vestige of the cold war in the world, this will hopefully bring butterfly effects on the other countries and regions that are in conflict of different kinds. Of course, we are well aware of the power of the “status-quo,” combined strongly with the national interests of the super-powers. That is why we need to build and strengthen a regional as well as global network among peace activists and peace movements with a view to creating a “global peace force” to forge strong solidarity and mutual support on the peace-building efforts/movements in a more strategic way.

At this point, allow me to introduce you the Seoul Declaration on a peaceful future of the Korean Peninsula and East Asia – the statement from the World Peace Convention 2018 organized by Korea YMCA in South Korea on 29th Oct. to 1st November, under the theme “Restoration of Just Relations, Historical Reconciliation and Nurturing a Culture of



Chairman Kim Jong-un of DPRK (L) and President Moon Jae-In of South Korea with two children.
Photo Source: google.com

Peace for Sang Saeng (Life Together) in the Korean Peninsula” where 250 peace-loving citizens from 17 countries met together.

The development course of the two Koreas from then on needs to be re-visited with sharp analysis, taking into consideration the strong cold-war tension and dynamics having influenced so much on the different course of nation-building and development of the two Koreas. In this context, although difficult and challenging, there is a definite need for both Koreas to “walk in other side’s shoes” in order to understand each other more deeply and closely.

“...We affirm that:

- It is solely the Korean people’s inalienable right to make decisions for their own national future.

Therefore, we are in strong solidarity with the peoples’ initiatives for building a lasting peace. We believe the empowerment of citizens/peoples is a key to the peace-building process.

- There is a strong inter-connectedness between peace-building efforts of Korean people and world peace movements, which share many of the same values. We recognize the continued vulnerability of the candle-light revolution in South Korea in the face of the interests of superpowers surrounding the Korean Peninsula. Therefore there is a strong

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December 6, 2018: PPRC Meditation through Light and Flowers
Photo by Miku Galarde



PPRC Organizer, Emma Leslie of CPCS
Photo by Miku Galarde

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"Keeping the ICF Circle informed; Connecting with Community of Interreligious Peacebuilders"

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum is a program of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. It values the significance of interreligious understanding and unity. Thus, it offers opportunities for study and appreciation of the different perspective of religions on peace, and discern the role of religion in peacebuilding. Yet, considering that unpeace is brought about by many factors, including the onslaught of neoliberal economic globalization, more people experience poverty, internally displaced people are increasing as communities are destroyed, native wisdom and values are overrun by Western and consumerist outlooks, patriarchy and racism persists, and climate change is now felt as the destruction of the Planet Earth seems unabated.

Peace is celebrated as a gift from the Divine, yet, we, the earthlings have the responsibility to make peace a reality. Although its contribution may just be like a drop of water into the lake, ICF seeks to equip *young people* of different religious traditions, especially from the marginalized communities of Asia and Pacific, to make waves of peace-building actions.

The Korean Peninsula Peace Process: A perspective from people's movement towards peacebuilding and reunification

need for building/strengthening solidarity with world peace movement initiated by diverse groups working for peace.

- The present moment is a Kairos time to strengthen people's networks so that civil society's peace renaissance can blossom beyond borders!

- A paradigm shift is called upon: the current "Strategic Security-first" paradigm seeks to maintain a "peace" by relying on a constant militarized war-footing. This paradigm needs to be replaced by a "Peace-first" paradigm, which seeks alternative mechanisms that will build trust, instill confidence, promote mutual understanding and dialogue, seek non-military solutions, and enable the free flow of ideas towards a shared Korean vision of unity and reunification..."

Before I close my presen-

tation, I would like to raise another very important point, i.e. using a four-character Chinese idiom called “易地思之” or “Walk in someone's shoes”! As you would be aware, the division of the Korean Peninsula was a bitter and inhumane consequence of the cold-war confrontation in the aftermath of World War II and national independence by outside forces in 1945. Nowadays, several historians argue that the Korean War in 1950 was, in fact, a proxy war fought by the two Koreas on behalf of the then the cold-war superpowers who

had divided one Korea. The development course of the two Koreas from then on needs to be re-visited with sharp analysis, taking into consideration the strong cold-war tension and dynamics having influenced so much on the different course of nation-building and development of the two Koreas. In this context, although difficult and challenging, there is a definite need for both Koreas to “walk in other side's shoes” in order to understand each other more deeply and closely.

Finally, we do seek strong solidarity from all of you towards the peace-building efforts by the peoples of the two Koreas. At the same time, we – the two Koreas – will do our best in forging solidarity with all of you as you strive to build peace in your own societal and historical contexts. Thank you very much. ☺☺☺

