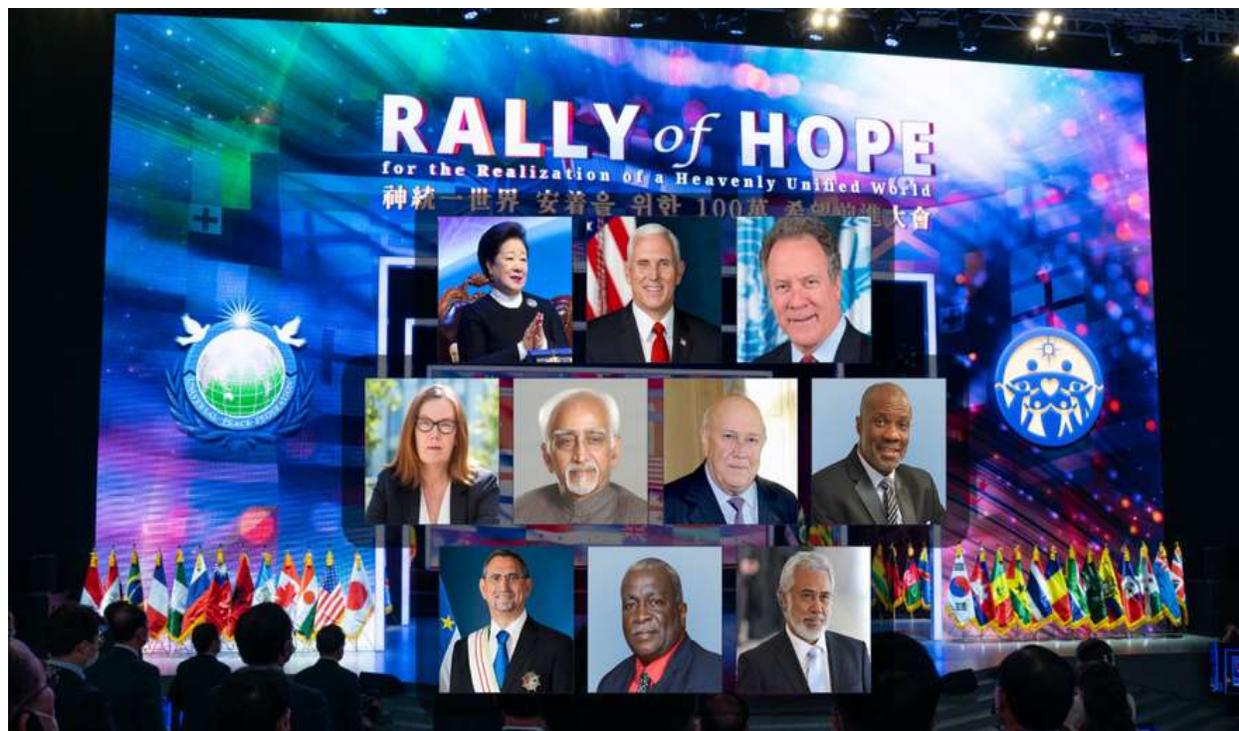


Former US VP Pence and world leaders call for unity at international Rally of Hope

Thomas P. McDevitt
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The rally, organized by the [Universal Peace Federation \(UPF\)](#), drew well over 1 million participants from across the globe, all united in the fight against oppression, poverty and racial discrimination.

Former Vice President Mike Pence joined other world leaders Saturday in calling on nations to forge new friendships and break down historic barriers to peace as the globe pulls free from the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Pence said that as coronavirus case counts drop and vaccination levels mount, it is now time to look ahead and begin building a better tomorrow.

"Every day we are one day closer to putting the long night of the coronavirus behind us. Rays of sunlight have pierced the horizon and a bright new day is dawning," Mr. Pence told current and former heads of state and prominent U.S. political figures participating in a digital "Rally of Hope."

"Now, as nations undertake the urgent work of restoring lost jobs, reopening shuttered industries, we must remember that our task is not merely to rebuild the world of the past, but to forge a brighter future for all our citizens," he said.

The rally, organized by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), drew well over 1 million participants from across the globe, all united in the fight against oppression, poverty and racial discrimination. Saturday's event was the fifth such rally since August, with the virtual gatherings offering a valuable outlet for optimism and encouragement in what's been a bleak period amid the coronavirus outbreak.

In addition to Mr. Pence, a host of other prominent officials and world leaders spoke at Saturday's rally, including Cape Verdean President [Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca](#), Guyanese Prime Minister Mark Phillips, former South African President F.W. de Klerk and others.

Rebuilding a more loving world as the coronavirus pandemic fades was a central theme of the event. Sarah Gilbert, a professor of vaccinology in the Nuffield Department of Medicine at the University of Oxford who worked on the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, said her team embraced the idea of caring for fellow human beings.

"The values that resulted in this vaccine being made available align with those of the Universal Peace Federation. This vaccine was made for all of us, to protect each other and ourselves," Ms. Gilbert said "We still have more to do, but the work of our international team has paid off, and the vaccine we made is already saving lives."

In her own remarks Saturday, UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon expressed hope that the longstanding dream of a united Korean Peninsula will become a reality.

"The people of Korea have been chosen by heaven. Nonetheless, the sad reality is the Korean Peninsula remains divided," Mrs. Moon said. "And we dream of a heavenly unified Korea. That dream will come true. If the Korean Peninsula, if the people of Korea can become one people and if the Asia Pacific can be united into heavenly civilization, and connect the entire world, we can become a force for good that will expand to all of the continents and oceans of the world."

Other speakers said that COVID-19 should serve as a reminder of how fragile life can be, and of the need to work past even the most entrenched divisions.

"I am optimistic that this unprecedented crisis is also our chance to put aside our differences, to show we are prepared to love our neighbor as ourselves and work as one to create the better and more peaceful world we all want to see," said David Beasley, former Republican governor of South Carolina who now serves as executive director of the United Nations World Food Programme.

"Every single one of us can contribute and help to build a brighter future for the children of Korea and beyond. If we work together in partnership, I truly believe we will one day achieve our dream of a world free from hunger and conflict," Mr. Beasley said. "I also know for sure that when people come together to pray together, break bread together, miracles begin to happen. So, let us pray together for peace and healing on the Korean Peninsula."

'Within our lifetime'

In his address, Mr. Pence underscored the unshakable U.S. commitment to its ally South Korea, and he stressed that Washington will stand hand in hand with Japan and other Pacific allies in the face of China's rise as an economic and military power.

A unified Korean Peninsula would contribute greatly to a more stable, peaceful Pacific region -- and Mr. Pence said that goal is within reach.

"We will stand firm against our common adversaries, even as we work in good faith to turn our adversaries into friends. In so doing, I believe we can lay a foundation to bring about the peaceful unification of Korea within our lifetime," Mr. Pence said. "That vision of freedom, peace, and prosperity is the same vision the people of the United States and the Republic of Korea have shared for nearly 70 years: A Korea united by the universal values of human dignity, liberty, and economic freedom."

Mrs. Moon, the leader of the Unification Church, and her late husband, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, devoted their lives to the reunification of the Korean Peninsula and to the promotion of world peace. They founded The Washington Times.

"Conflict among humans is a concept as old as time, and peace, as a result, has evaded us on this earth for centuries," said Mark Phillips, the prime minister of Guyana. "But every new day, we have a chance to start anew and fix the errors of the past while forging a new path forward; a path to resolving conflict and uniting as a global unit."

The need for countries to come together as one has never been more important. Officials said that it will be crucial to lend a hand -- economically, spiritually, and in other ways -- to less fortunate nations that face the toughest climb back from the pandemic.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had repercussions not only of a biomedical and epidemiological nature on a global scale, but also social, economic, political, cultural and historical impacts unprecedented in the recent history of epidemics," said Cape Verde President [Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca](#). "This crisis is global and multifaceted. It is a health crisis, but it is also, without doubt, also an economic, financial, social, environmental and often political crisis -- shaping the development of almost the entire planet, and with negative consequences in the least developed countries."