

• **WON Heeryong** I am very proud that the culture of Jeju haenyeo is listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. I believe that the UNESCO designation is a big first step in its preservation. We have taken many measures to protect the culture since the designation. First, we created a haenyeo society. We offer support in the pricing of their top shell catches to guarantee profits for the divers, and we subsidize the elderly divers who have difficulty sustaining a regular income. For the haenyeo culture to be preserved, first the ocean has to be preserved, but the island's seas are rapidly becoming contaminated. The prerequisite for the preservation of the haenyeo is the protection of our marine resources. To that end, Jeju Island plans to invest more funds to protect said marine life. In addition to setting up a taskforce, we are working on a five-year plan.

• **Audrey AZOULAY** I think the culture of the Jeju haenyeo is a beautiful tradition, and it is a good example of an interaction between humans and nature. People should never be separated from nature. This great tradition should be handed down to the next generation, and for that to be possible, I agree that the ocean must be kept clean. UNESCO holds a scientific duty and we also have programs for cleaner waters. We have such projects set for the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030). Jeju will also have to be more involved in the fields of ecology and oceanography, but the island is an excellent example among UNESCO listed sites. Jeju Island is a role model for the international community.

• **BAK Sangmee** How do you think Korea could contribute in terms of education?

• **Audrey AZOULAY** Wide-ranging and life-long education is key. Social and technological evolution are ambitious agendas. Korea's investment in education is remarkable and can be seen as the engine for the nation's successes. Research conducted by UNESCO has shown that health and education are the most important factors in economic growth. Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon often mentioned in his speeches that he had learned English as a child

using UNESCO published books. This shows how important educational support is. Success comes with responsibility. Korea's responsibility would be to support countries that are under-established in terms of education. Support is crucial for the education of girls. Korea should devote itself to supporting girls' education projects in Asia. They need constant investment and attention. Private enterprises, in particular, should expand their investments in education.

• **BAK Sangmee** How do you plan to meet UNESCO's long-term goals, such as sustainable growth in tourism?

• **WON Heeryong** Jeju is acutely aware of its duty to preserve our UNESCO heritage sites and will make various efforts in the areas of peace, ecology, and education.

[Special Dialogue]

Overcoming Legacies of the Past, Promoting Reconciliation and Peace in Northeast Asia



Jose RAMOS-HORTA
Former president of East Timor/
Nobel prize laureate in 1996

Moderator **PARK Jin** president of the Asia Future Institute
Presenter & Discussant **Jose RAMOS-HORTA** Former president of East Timor/ Nobel prize laureate in 1996

Presenter **Jose RAMOS-HORTA**

I am pleased to be again in Korea and in such hopeful times. The Republic of Korea is one of the world's most vibrant democracies, with an independent and inquisitive media, an informed and vigilant civil society, and an uncompromising judiciary.

While you live in peace and prosperity, at the same time almost anywhere, any day of the week, you can read about violence and death, the immense suffering of the innocent, of children and youngsters, and of countries imploding violently along ethnic and religious lines. Over many thousands of years, human beings waged wars, sometimes to satisfy the basic needs of survival to find food, water and land to cultivate the food. However, most wars have been waged with the ambition of expanding influence and securing even greater gains, to the detriment of others whom have been defined as adversaries and enemies.

This vast region of Northeast Asia, home to 1.5 billion people – Korean, Chinese and Japanese – with an extraordinarily rich history and culture, has been known for the many destructive wars that killed tens of millions of people. The region boasts

the world's largest combined standing armies, facing off against each other, with a powerful foreign force that ostensibly provides on your soil, in the ROK and Japan a security umbrella. Arguably, this is a credible deterrence that has kept the peace in the region since the Korean War.

But, North and South Korea, and virtually every country in the Asian region also know firsthand the tragic consequences of wars, enduring immense suffering caused by centuries of conflict unleashed by tyrants and demagogues.

Timor-Leste, a country of a little more than 1 million people, shares a history of war, occupation and resistance, with Koreans. We survived and prevailed through centuries of colonial rule, occupation by the Japanese Imperial Army, re-colonization by Portugal and occupation by Indonesia, during which close to one third of our population perished. However, in 2002, we celebrated our freedom, when we became a nation with the first new democracy of the millennium. We honored our martyrs and heroes, and began the process of looking after the veterans, widows, orphans and those mutilated by war. We reconciled with our domestic adversaries, those who did not think and believe like us; we forgave our ene-

mies without waiting for an apology. For the sake of healing, we rejected an international tribunal to try those who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. Slowly, we are building a peaceful, inclusive, democratic, pluralistic and fair country for all.

I believe that Korea, China and Japan have an infinite potential that can be unleashed to further peace and prosperity, but this can only be when a truth finding process is undertaken. There is no denying that Japan was the culprit in this tragic catalogue of wars and occupation. Japanese leaders must do more to teach the full truth to today's and future generations about Japanese aggression against Korea and China and other countries in Asia. I am sure the Chinese and Korean peoples would then be able to finally reconcile with Japan.

From the moment President Moon Jae-in took office in May 2017, following a highly competitive, free and democratic election, he sought dialogue with the North Korean regime to realize the elusive dream of lasting peace, reconciliation, denuclearization and reunification. He courageously reached out to the dictator in the North; even as tensions were at boiling point caused by the destabilizing acrimonious exchanges between the North Korean dictator and the U.S. president. President Moon's overtures to the North were widely ridiculed and opposed by domestic and American critics. Deeply religious and committed to peace, President Moon was not discouraged by the hostility of the Trump administration and misgivings conveyed from Tokyo in regards to the entreaties between ROK and DPRK.

The mood has changed dramatically, from fear of an imminent war fed by incendiary tweets threatening the nuclear annihilation of North Korea by the most powerful country in the world, to one of celebration as a result of the historic summit in Singapore that ended with a statement of intention to denuclearize the Korean peninsula.

President Moon is absolutely correct in doing everything in his power to pursue the much-cherished dream of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which will bring peace and reunification. This prom-

ises to be a long and tortuous process, but the seeds of peace that President Moon and his two predecessors, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun have planted will bear fruit if Koreans stand fully behind this peace process, keep the hope and faith, and refuse to give up in the face of the many obstacles ahead. The peoples of the Korean peninsula and of the wider region deserve and expect no less from their leaders, who are duty-bound to pursue patient dialogue and should explore avenues of possible and desirable cooperation.

As President Moon negotiates with his North Korean counterpart, I am sure that he has not forgotten the people of the DPRK who for decades have languished under a tyrannical communist dynasty. Hence, fundamental human rights and freedom for all people on the Korean peninsula must be part of the peace process. Kim Jong-un could send a further message of good faith if he was to decree the end of arbitrary detention, the closure of labor camps, the end of torture and summary executions, and the release of all political prisoners. If it is true that Kim Jong-un loves his people as stated by President Trump, then surely, he should take steps toward opening up North Korea and to allow his people more freedom. He has ample time to initiate and manage a process of incremental change, and can go down in history as an architect of gradual evolution from tyranny to a more humane and compassionate political and social regime.

As I stand here, I bow to the memory of all Koreans who lost their lives in the fight for independence against foreign rulers, for democracy, and for freedom against dictatorship. I bow to the memory of the late President Kim Dae-Jung, a man of vision, principles and conviction, a fighter for human rights and democracy, and a bridge builder with the North. He was a personal friend of my country. In September 1999, working closely with President Bill Clinton and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, he dispatched a Korean peace-keeping battalion to my country, contributing to an end to the violence there. I commend the Korean armed forces for their pro-

fessionalism and bravery in the service of the UN in my country. I was, and still am proud to have nominated Kim for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999. He was awarded the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize.

In a speech in Berlin's Old City Hall in July 2017, President Moon mentioned that easing security on and adjusting the economy of the North is vital. The Korean War, the U.S. military presence at its borders, and the NATO's orchestration of regime change in Iraq and Libya after the Gadhafi regime gave up its nuclear weapons program, are all roots of the North Korean regime's obsession with nuclear weapons capability, its sense of vulnerability and fears, and its desire to be taken seriously as a regional military power.

There are no short cuts to peace. The road might be fraught with man-made obstacles, stemming from individual or collective experiences, perceptions and fears that have been exacerbated by personal ambition and egos of those at the center. We all can be assured that there will be no straight line in the pursuit of a durable peace on the Korean peninsula and beyond. Nevertheless, some first major steps have been taken toward denuclearization and the elimination of the threat of war. As President Moon rightly stated, "A step-by-step and comprehensive approach is required." Let us hope that all sides deliver on their pledges. The prevention of conflict and war through dialogue and mediation to settle disputes must always be our preferred options. And when these are actively, creatively and patiently exercised in a timely fashion, they may produce results.

I dream of the time when the three great countries China, Korea and Japan meet on the golden bridge of peace.

Discussant

- **PARK Jin** You have visited Korea many times. What aspects of Korea interest you the most?
- **Jose RAMOS-HORTA** One thing that has impressed me almost every time I have visited Korea is

"change." Korea used to lead very indigent life. They don't even have natural resources. They only have brains and hands. When the economic crisis hit Asia, Koreans were proud of what they had at that time. It was a mind full of patriotism. Almost all Koreans gave property and gold to the bank to pay back money to IMF; their eagerness to change enabled them to become a big country in the present day. We can feel the dignity of the people here. Another interesting thing that came to me is how Koreans were unforgiving about corruption. They were very intolerant toward abuse of power, even on a minimal scale. This is why Korea is extraordinary and we must keep an eye on this country. All of these things impressed me obviously.

• **PARK Jin** A security crisis on the Korean peninsula was escalated by the nuclear threats from North Korea. However, this became a chance to build peace. From the Panmunjom Declaration to the Singapore summit, what is your view of the changing situation in Korea and how do you see the role of South Korea in this?

• **Jose RAMOS-HORTA** At the U.S. level, many more dramatic peace moves were initiated by the Republican administration, minimizing all Democratic Party presents. In the case of Korea, interestingly, while the U.S. boldly moved forward led by Republicans, Korea's peace initiative to the North Korea was from liberal leaders: President Kim Dae-Jung and President Roh Moo-Hyun. In reality, the fate of this peninsula was determined by these two leaders. They moved forward by accommodating the interest of the U.S., China, and Japan since we are in a global world. Following his predecessors, I am very impressed by the ability of President Moon. Any further dynamic processes will depend on President Moon.

- **PARK Jin** Do you think this effort will bring a successful outcome, such as the denuclearization of North Korea?
- **Jose RAMOS-HORTA** It is very difficult to read North Korea, which is a communist regime. We do not know the dynamics; we cannot predict since we do not fully understand the dangers, risks and divisions



within North Korea. The whole world should fully support the North. The issue of nuclear weapons is just one scenario. But as to the overall situation in North Korea: How about the people there? Of course, I agree with President Moon, that he must deal with the nuclear issue first. After that, North Korean leader Kim must expose other values to liberalize the country's political system. At least he can end torture, end poverty and end discrimination. I hope that the military and ruling party in North Korea continue to support him. Advocating human rights is important.

- **PARK Jin** What other requirements for this region - North Korea, South Korea, Japan and China - are needed to create a community having common values?

- **Jose RAMOS-HORTA** Three countries still have the legacy of WWII - the invasion by the Japanese; but please allow me to say that Japan paid enormously more than any country in the history of Asia. Japan

is the only country that suffered from the impact of atomic bombs. Japanese leaders were put on trial. The Japanese people accepted the punishment in silence.

It is an undeniable truth that Japan has infected the peace, and should acknowledge their fault. Timor-Leste was also invaded by Japan. We also had sex slaves and I have also met them. Why I am addressing this issue is that they have to look at this from a longer perspective. How these three countries can come together to lift Asia into the 21st century. To transform Asia and the world, how can they work together despite their history? It is a challenge for the leaders of these regions at this time.

- **PARK Jin** What do you think about the role of the UN in this region specifically on the Korean peninsula in this process?

- **Jose RAMOS-HORTA** The UN has never faced such an extraordinary complex multilateral challenge before. There are issues of funding, peace keeping

and building. The newly appointed secretary will possibly serve for 10 years and have to deal with refugees with wisdom and sacrifice to build peace. However, in many current complex situations, such as in Palestine, the UN has a marginal role. There are some situations in some countries that have disputes in which the UN cannot participate. The UN does not have to be in every conflict if the countries in the region are able to work their problems out.

Policy Implications

- Korea and China should forgive Japan to build and boost cooperation in East Asia region.
- Denuclearization and the elimination of the threat of war from North Korea should be pursued via a step-by-step dialogue.
- Measures to guarantee fundamental human rights and freedom for all the people on the Korean peninsula must be a part of the peace process.