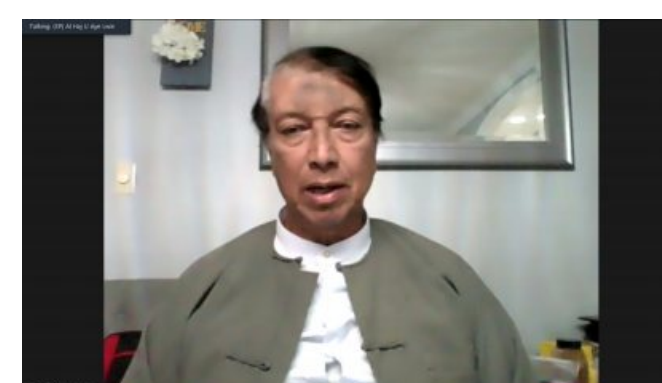
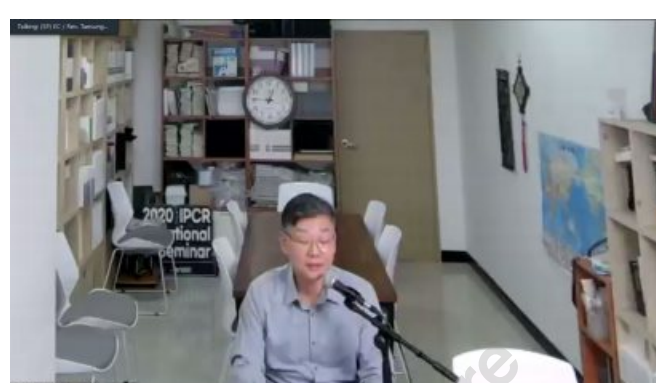
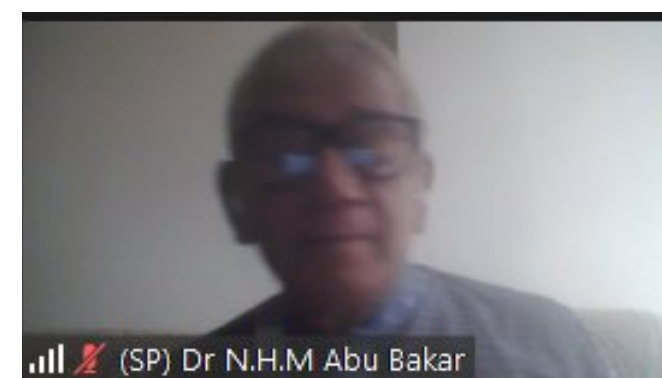




DAY 2 | MAIN ASSEMBLY

Action-Oriented Religions for Peace Asia



Based on the Incheon ACRP Assembly in 2014, *Religions for Peace Asia* pursued the five key flagship projects, namely prevention of human trafficking, education on the dignity of life, conflict transformation and reconciliation, development and the environment, and lastly, advancement of youth leadership. Moderated by **Dr. Pablito Baybado, Jr** (*RfP Philippines*), this plenary session aims at reporting the flagship projects, the achievements, challenges and the go-forward for the post-assembly activities.

The Asia Pacific Women of Faith Network (APWoFN) took the lead in the prevention of human trafficking project. In her report, **Dr. Lilian Sison**, the *former Chair of APWoFN*, presented human trafficking as a widespread global issue affecting many people specially women and girls at varying levels. The women leaders conducted research on the state of human trafficking in their own respective countries. The national chapters have used these materials to raise public awareness and take positive action in mitigating modern day slavery in their own areas.

ACRP implemented the “Education and Dignity of life” project in Bangladesh. According to **Dr. N.H.M Abu Bakar**, the *secretary general of Religions for Peace Bangladesh* “ACRP through its national chapters is being engaged in advocacy activities against child labor, child marriage and child trafficking. ACRP provided hope through education to the children of poor families in six districts in Bangladesh by providing scholarships, rights education, activities, and other programs to children of the marginalized sector in those districts.

Religions for Peace Asia has implemented the “conflict transformation and reconciliation” **Al Haj U Aye Lwin**, the co-founder and member of *Religions for Peace Myanmar*, highlighted the collaboration of the *RfP Myanmar*, *RfP Asia* and *RfP International* as an effective means of engaging in multi-layered and multi-religious advocacy in action, including its engagement with UN Security Council and ASEAN member states. *Religions for Peace Myanmar* and *International* convened the religion for peace advisory forum for peace and reconciliation creating a space for dialogue under the civilian government, the military, ethnic armed organizations, and the civil society to nurture Myanmar's multi-religious identity and advance multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation.



“Our most urgent concern is controlling the Pandemic. That concern must extend beyond national, religious and cultural borders because the virus does not discriminate. The virus does not recognize borders. Our charity must likewise extend beyond our borders. We are all in the same boat and unless everyone is safe, nobody is safe.”

Rev. Fr. Carlos Reyes
Religions for Peace Philippines

Another key project on reconciliation is the KCRP project in the Korean Peninsula. In his report, **Rev. Kim Tae-sung**, *Secretary General of Korean Conference of Religions for Peace*, highlighted the cooperation between the interreligious councils of the two countries in the Korean peninsula to bridge people-to-people dialogue, and even influencing state-to-state high level dialogue towards peace and reconciliation.

The *China Committee on Religions for Peace (CCRP)* has taken the lead in implementing the “environment and development” flagship project. The CCRP constantly conducted activities to promote awareness to people about environmental production, motivate others to take actions such as the project of turning deserts into oases and others. **Rev. Xu Xiaohong**, *Vice President of CCRP*, emphasized that “CCRP will continue to collaborate with ACRP to promote vision, increase inter-faith exchanges, so as to create a clean and beautiful world, and pass it on to our future generations.”

Another important project of ACRP is the advancement of youth leadership. **Dr. Renz Argao**, *the moderator of the Asia Pacific Interfaith Youth Network*, presented the annual youth camp that has become the platform in the formation for ACRP youth leaders, thereby assuring the future committed and competent leaders of ACRP.

Rev. Dr. Nobuhiro Nemoto and **Mr. Tatsuya Yoshida** from ACRP Secretariat reported that they have started the crowdfunding campaign from August 1 to October 30 of this year to raise the amount of 300,000 yen to support the ACRP flagship projects. They appealed each national chapter should make more efforts to raise funds to implement projects in each country.

Based on the assessment of the above ACRP projects, **Rev. Masamichi Kamiya**, *Senior Advisor to the ACRP Secretary General*, presented the post Tokyo-Assembly flagship projects. While they are essentially the same five key projects, he said that ACRP will be more action-oriented in its implementation.



The **Most Rev. Makoto Uematsu** of the Chairperson of *RfP Japan* and the Primate of the Anglican Church in Japan, has officially announced that, as the assembly host chapter, RfP Japan will contribute ¥ 30,000,000 (approximately US\$ 273,000) to ACRP for the implementation of the flagship project. The RfP Japan generosity was gladly accepted by **Prof. Dr. Din Syamsuddin**, *the ACRP Moderator*. He concluded by saying that through this seed fund and the commitment of the ACRP to pursue peace in Asia, ACRP will surely take the path of *arigato-in-action*.



The Role of the Religious Communities during the Covid-19 Pandemic

How do we confront and address the Covid-19 Pandemic Era? What will be the role of the religious communities in mitigating the impact of the Covid-19 on individuals and communities? Chaired by **Prof. Desmond Cahill**, Chair of RfP Australia, Plenary Session III aims to highlight the best practices in handling the impact of covid-19.

The keynote speaker, **Hon. Mr. Keizo Takemi**, a member of the House of Councilors, Japan and a consultant to the Parliamentary Association of the World Health Organization, calls for an interdisciplinary measure in building human security as an approach to addressing the national and global risks of the covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic is without borders; hence it requires multi-level cooperation and engagement. Thus, he proposes an effective universalism, which means that the approach to the pandemic should ensure that everyone will have a role to play and that no one should be left behind.

Imam Yang Faming, Vice President of CCRP and President of China Islamic Association, emphasized that “the right to life is the greatest human right.” Based on this principle, he reported that CCRP has conducted many programs and activities addressing the COVID-19 such as donations of materials and medicines both inside and outside of China. CCRP has combined courage, responsibility, science and technology which ultimately paved their way towards recovery from the impact of Covid-19 pandemic.

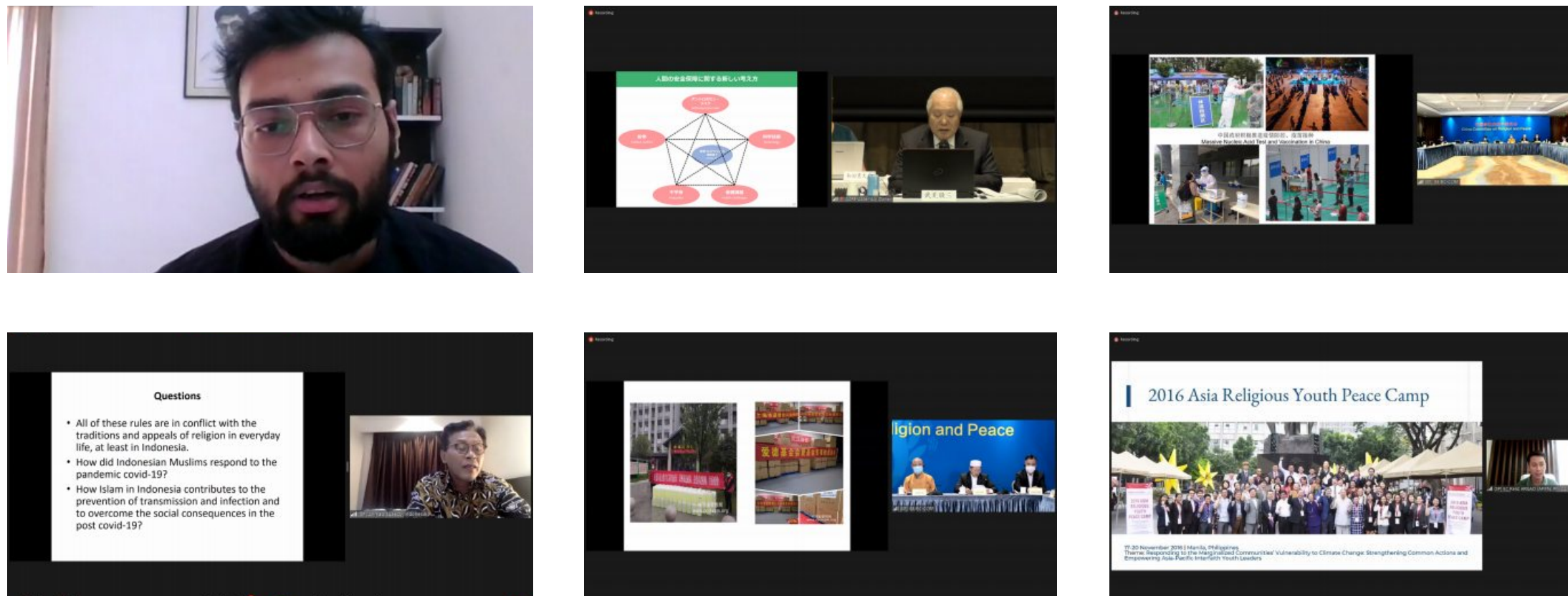
Having experienced the Covid-19 himself, **Rev. Fr. Carlos Reyes** of Religions for Peace Philippines believes that the religions’ main role during the pandemic is to be at the service of the wounded world. In the words of Fr. Reyes, “Our most urgent concern is controlling the Pandemic. That concern must extend beyond national, religious and cultural borders because the virus does not discriminate. The virus does not recognize borders. Our charity must likewise extend beyond our borders. We are all in the same boat and unless everyone is safe, nobody is safe.”



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Renta Nishihara, President of Rikkyo University, Anglican Bishop of Diocese of Mid-Japan, narrated the experience of Bishop Uematsu and his wife as they travel to Wakkanai for a Sunday worship with an old woman who lives in the nursing home, to demonstrate the significance of prayer or liturgical services as the most important way of facing the impact of covid-19. According to him, “we religious need to go back to this essence, precisely because we live in the online era.”

For **Dr. Oleh Ahmad Suaedy**, Dean of Islam Nusantara Faculty, UNUSIA, Jakarta, religious authority plays a major role in the service to society during this pandemic, citing his studies and experiences in the Muslim communities in Indonesia. He said that the involvement of religious leaders who have base at the grassroots level strengthens the legitimacy of the obligation of the believers to comply with pandemic health protocols, and they have succeeded in reducing the rate of transmission and death and promote an increased in healing and well-being.

Ms. Haidi Fajardo, Deputy Secretary General of Religions for Peace Philippines, discussed COVID-19 issues in the overall human health, national economy, gender inequality and in UN sustainable goals. “Religious actors and faith-based organizations like Religions for Peace are undeniably part of the solution to world problems”, said **Ms. Haidi Fajardo** who, as a member of Asia-Pacific Women of Faith Network, witnessed men and women in action, providing solutions to challenges caused by a global pandemic.



Believing that youth are not only the future but more importantly the present, **Mr. Shameer Rishad**, *Secretary General of APIYN*, presented the various challenges that youth in India faced in the time of a COVID-19 pandemic. He then encouraged the youth to continue with peace-building initiatives and to harness their potential to be future leaders of their countries by engaging in dialogues and interreligious friendship.

Afghanistan session

At the Afghanistan session moderated by **Rev. Dr. Nobuhiro Nemoto** *ACRP Secretary General* and **Dr. Hyunmi Ahn**, *KCRP*, the plenary discussed the role of ACRP in the difficult situation of Afghanistan.

Reports on the humanitarian activities in Afghanistan have been presented by **Mr. Sabirullah Memiawal**, *the director of Your Voice Organization, an Afghan NGO*, **Mr. Ryo Onoyama**, *the representative of Peace Village United, a Japanese NGO*, **Mr. Hammedullah Hamid**, *the representative of Afghanistan Office, JEN*, **Ms. Akiko Matsuura**, *program officer for projects in Afghanistan and Turkey of JEN*, **Ms. Eri Yamamoto**, *Country Director of SVA Afghanistan Office and Secretary General of Shanti Volunteer Association, a Japanese NGO*, and **Mr. Muhammad Hanif Khan**, *RfP Pakistan and EC member of ACRP*.

During the discussion, many leaders have expressed their sympathy and appreciation to the Afghan civil leader's courage to educate their people on non-violence and dialogue while in a dangerous and violence-prone environment. The session concluded with a reaffirmed commitment of ACRP to work with partners in peace building activities and promote dialogue between Afghanistan and its neighboring countries, and a conscious effort to extend assistance and support to Afghan people, especially the most vulnerable sector.

