**Acceptance Remarks at the SH Special Peace Award Ceremony**

*5 February 2020, Seoul, Korea*

Thank you for your warm introduction.

Dr. Hak Ja Han, Universal Peace Federation Founder,

Sunhak Peace Prize Foundation Members,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great privilege to stand before you this evening and humbly accept the 2020 Sunhak Peace Prize.

I’m incredibly grateful for this esteemed honor, and it is quite meaningful to follow in the footsteps of the previous luminary awardees you have bestowed this honor upon.

My special recognition goes to Dr. Hak Ja Han for her visionary patronage of this award, as well as for her longtime advocacy efforts in support of world peace, global citizenship, and sustainable development issues.

I also take this opportunity to commend the impressive work and forward-thinking vision of the Sunhak Peace Prize Foundation.

The critical efforts by the Sunhak Peace Prize Foundation are essential as we collectively strive to expand essential understanding, cooperation, and tolerance on the road to world peace and global sustainability.

In this connection, I simply couldn’t be more proud to receive this award intended to further the ideals of such a pioneering individual who so firmly believed in the importance of peace, human development, coexistence, and environmental protection.

My deepest gratitude goes to the Sunhak Peace Prize Foundation Members for this very special honor.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our world is changing and this is bringing many new challenges and uncertainties to the geopolitical and economic order.

Multilateral cooperation is viewed with increasing skepticism just as the world needs it the most. Human rights are under threat as nationalism spreads. Development and humanitarian funds are being slashed.

And our climate crisis is deepening as wildfires burn, sea levels rise higher, and temperatures continue to surge.

Under this backdrop of instability and waning internationalism, I firmly believe that we must work together through expanded partnerships and cooperation, as well a driving commitment to global citizenship, to cope with these seemingly insurmountable challenges.

During my ten-year tenure as United Nations Secretary-General, I strived to execute my leadership duties by leveraging the power of partnerships and promoting the spirit of global citizenship.

This was critical in bringing the entire world together to agree to the UN’s 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Paris Climate Agreement.

These were two of my biggest achievements leading the UN as they provide humanity, and our planet, with a collaborative blueprint to ensure the future we want.

And global partnerships, including the active participation of nonprofit organizations, civil society groups, religious organizations, philanthropists, and other key stakeholders like you, are necessary if we are to deliver on the United Nations’ development and climate commitments.

But to establish long-term solutions, achieve world peace, and save our rapidly warming planet, we need inclusive and participatory action from all global citizens.

This includes, especially, young people, as they are absolutely essential to solving so many of the world’s challenges such as achieving the SDGs, tackling climate change, and building peace and resolving conflicts.

As such, I’ve been trying my best to help elevate global citizenship as a driving vision for young, transformative leaders to help us forge a more peaceful and sustainable world.

In this regard, two years ago I launched the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, based in Vienna, Austria to help provide young people and women with a greater say in their own destiny, as well as a greater stake in their own dignity.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The actions we take in the next ten years will be critical to ensure the future viability of both humanity and our planet. So we must work hard to illuminate true peace.

What type of peace? I am reminded of the words of President John F. Kennedy who said, “I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and hope and build a better life for their children …not merely peace in our time, but peace for all time.”

In 2020, the year of the rat, and beyond, we all share a common destiny grounded in sustainability, peace, and prosperity. Let’s expand our unified efforts to realize this shared destiny for all global citizens in the years to come.

I thank you for your attention and this great honor. /END/