

President's Welcoming Remarks
The 12th Seoul ODA International Conference
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1. Greetings

Good morning, everyone. It is my great pleasure to see you all here on this beautiful day.

Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun,
Deputy Executive Director Asa Regner of UN Women,
Chairman and President Sung-soo Eun of the Export-Import Bank of Korea,
Senior Vice President Hiroshi Kato of JICA,
And all of today's presenters and panelists,
Thank you for honoring us with your presence here today.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,
Thank you for your endless efforts for international development cooperation and for taking time out of your very busy schedules to be here with us today.

On behalf of my entire team at KOICA,
I am both honored and pleased to welcome you all to the 12th Seoul ODA International Conference.

2. Significance of the conference

The Seoul ODA International Conference is an annual event jointly hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and KOICA, and it has become an important international platform to discuss development cooperation issues.

3. Relationship between peace, democracy, human rights, and development

In preparing for this conference, I recalled my own past, before coming to KOICA, which includes 20 years as an activist and another 20 years as a member of the National Assembly.

I was involved in efforts at the National Assembly to send peacekeeping troops to East Timor,

I also participated in the international symposium on "Peace in Asia and the Role of Women" organized jointly by women of South Korea, North Korea, and Japan,

and I was a member of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), a network of about 200 members from 40 countries.

As an activist and an assemblywoman, I have traveled consistently on the path towards human rights, democracy, peace, and gender equality.

Along my path, I have been inspired by these words from the late Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations: **"No development without peace, and no peace without development and human rights."**

This message reminds us that peace and human rights are both the preconditions and the core values of development.

That being said, it was announced at the Davos Forum earlier this year that conflict around the world has intensified from its level 10 years ago.

The Freedom House report also informs us that freedom and democracy have been in retreat over the last decade.

Within the past year alone, more than 10,000 children died amid armed conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and South Sudan.

More and more people are losing their homes and becoming refugees amid seemingly endless conflicts and terrorist attacks. Social conflicts, unfair judicial procedures, and corruption continue to victimize poor and vulnerable people around the world.

To tackle these global challenges, the international community has established the Sustainable Development Goals and adopted the “Five Ps” under the principle of “leaving no one behind”.

People at the center of the development of society;
prosperity ensured by economic growth;
the planet that should be protected for future generations,
peace as a precondition for a sustainable society, economy, and
environment;
and partnership as a means of turning these words into action.

By adopting the "Five Ps", the international community reached a consensus on honoring these five principles and explicitly outlined the key values and true meaning of development.

4. Korea as inspiration in the era of the SDGs

Korea serves as an inspiration to the international community in the era of the SDGs because it endured a long and arduous history of colonialization, division, war, and poverty, and finally achieved economic growth admired by the world as the Miracle on the Han River and firmly established human-oriented democracy.

Korea emerged out of the ashes of war to become an economic powerhouse in a very short period of time. At the same time, the Korean people achieved progress in democracy through their own power, as seen in the April 19 Revolution in 1960, the June democratic movement in 1987, and the candlelight demonstration in 2016.

As the economy grew, Koreans became more aware of the value of democracy. And the democracy built upon the citizens' participation, in turn, improved the quality of economic growth.

5. Korean Peninsula Peace Process

The Korean Peninsula now stands at a turning point. The 70-year-old fear rooted in national division is being transformed

into hope for peace.

This transformation started with the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games in February. This led to the historic inter-Korean summit on April 27, where the two leaders announced the Panmunjeom Declaration and pledged to strive for peace on the Peninsula. This month, Seoul and Pyongyang are preparing for their third summit within this year.

Let us recall that only a few months ago the whole Peninsula was on the precipice of a crisis. What a change we have witnessed today!

The way toward peace may not be smooth for the two Koreas, but I am confident that the power of Koreans that has led us on the path of economic growth and democracy will help us overcome the agony of division.

I also firmly believe that the winds of peace blowing onto the Korean Peninsula will deliver a message of hope to the many regions around the world suffering under conflict and confrontation.

6. Korean Peninsula Peace Process and the Role of KOICA

Distinguished guests,

At this critical historic juncture, I believe that KOICA, as the

nation's leading international cooperation development agency, must garner wisdom to attain the goals of peace, democracy, human rights, and gender equality.

We must also reinterpret Korea's experience from the perspective of the SDGs and the Five Ps to share with the rest of the world. Korea's experience is not the only answer for development. But I believe that many countries will find an inspirational model in our experience, and our failures will also serve as lessons to others.

We look forward to today's discussions and pledge to listen attentively to all of your insightful comments and suggestions for our future efforts toward global peace, democracy, and human rights.

7. Closing

To conclude my remarks, I would like to ask for your strong support for peace on the Korean Peninsula so that it may settle firmly on our ground.

Once again, thank you all to the distinguished guests for being here today.