



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

335 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel (212) 439-4000, Fax (212) 986-1083

<Unofficial Translation>

Check against Delivery

Address

by

H.E. Mr. Lee Myung-bak

President of the Republic of Korea

at

**the 66th Session of the General Assembly
of the United Nations**

21 September 2011

New York

Mr. President, Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to begin by extending my sincere congratulations to you, Ambassador Al-Nasser, on your assumption of the Presidency of the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly. I have every confidence that under your able leadership this session shall indeed be guided to a fruitful conclusion.

May I also take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, on your re-election as Secretary-General of the United Nations with unanimous support from the Member States. I thank you, Mr. Secretary-General for the great commitment and devotion you have demonstrated over the last five years to achieve the vision of a "responsible UN". I have no doubt that in your second term you shall contribute even further to creating a "Stronger UN for a Better World."

Mr. President,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Korea's accession to the UN.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the Republic of Korea came into the world with the UN and grew up together with the Organization.

It is under the auspices of the UN that the democratic government of the Republic of Korea was established in 1948. Through a UN General Assembly Resolution, the Government of the Republic of Korea gained international recognition as the only lawful government on the Korean Peninsula. When the Korean War broke out two years later, the UN forces played a decisive role in defending the country. In the aftermath of the war and during the years of national reconstruction, the UN provided us with generous economic assistance and the idea of universal human rights, and thus promoted progress both on the economic and democratic fronts.

Despite such special historic ties between the UN and the Republic of Korea, it was only in 1991, more than forty years later with the end of the Cold War, that the Republic of Korea's admission to the UN was achieved.

For the past twenty years, the Republic of Korea has exerted every effort to realize the causes and values of the UN. We have been playing an active role in various areas of international cooperation,

including the global fight against poverty, sustainable development, the promotion of human rights and democracy, and the maintenance of international peace.

The Republic of Korea began its journey as one of the poorest countries in the world engulfed in war and poverty, and managed to achieve remarkable success both on the economic and democratic fronts. It may therefore be said that the Republic of Korea is an exemplary success story in the international community that fully embraces and reflects the values espoused by the UN, be it democracy, human rights or development.

Now the Republic of Korea wants to give back to the international community even more than what it has ever received. The Republic of Korea stands ready to extend a helping hand to those who are in need, providing them with appropriate support and care. We are keen to closely cooperate with the UN and to play a constructive role in combating various challenges the international community faces.

Mr. President,

Maintaining international peace and security is the fundamental responsibility of the UN. For the past sixty years, the UN has made every effort to prevent war and armed conflicts in the international arena. Furthermore, the UN has provided various and creative means to maintain sustainable peace in dangerous parts of the world, from preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding.

The most striking example may be the advancement of the UN Peacekeeping Operations. There has been an increase in demand for UN PKO activities since the end of the Cold War. As a result, not only has there been an increase in the number of personnel but the work of the operations have also become more diverse and multifaceted, extending beyond the monitoring of cease-fires to assisting nation-building.

The UN Peacekeeping Operations offer great hope for millions of those who suffer in the midst of war and natural disasters. The Republic of Korea is proud to participate in ten UN PKO missions including in Haiti and Lebanon.

Today, while still struggling with conventional security threats, the international community faces new types of security threat such as the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the threat of terrorism.

The international community must strengthen its non-proliferation regime in order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and long range missiles.

Furthermore, the threat of transnational terrorism has emerged as a serious security issue that requires concerted efforts from the international community, in particular since the 9/11 attacks. The Republic of Korea stands firm against and condemns all forms and manifestations of terrorism. Terrorism, a vicious means to achieve political objectives by taking innocent civilian lives, cannot be justified under any circumstances. The international community must reaffirm its determination to eradicate terrorism and step up its collective counter-terrorism efforts.

The greatest threat of all perhaps emanates from nuclear terrorism. International cooperation is now needed more than ever to prevent nuclear terrorism. Following the First Nuclear Security Summit in Washington last year, the Second Nuclear Security Summit will be held in Seoul in March next year. The Republic of Korea is making every effort to ensure that the summit will constitute a valuable opportunity for the international community to build a more solid system of international cooperation necessary to prevent nuclear terrorism.

Mr. President,

This year, the international community has witnessed a wave of dramatic changes sweeping across North Africa and the Middle East. The democratic movement that began in Tunisia which then swiftly spread to Egypt and Libya has proved that democracy is a universal value of humanity that transcends region and culture. Right now, even at this very moment, the people of Syria and Yemen are undertaking great risks to hold aloft the torch of freedom and democracy.

Democracy is a vehicle that holds together the basic values of humanity such as freedom and equality, human rights and the rule of law. The people's demand for democracy is their legitimate right, and the international community and the UN must do all they can to protect these people from persecution and human rights abuses.

The UN's efforts have played a great role in the recent democratic progress in Africa. The UN facilitated the birth of the Republic of South Sudan through peaceful referendum, and played a crucial role in the progress of democracy in Cote d'Ivoire by realizing the transfer of power.

Nevertheless, as history has only too clearly shown, building democracy is no easy task. It is important that fledgling democracies in many parts of the world become sustainable and robust. Above all, it is essential that these nations form stable governments through elections and achieve economic development. And the UN must be there for them.

Democracy constitutes a foundation for sustainable national development. For the Republic of Korea, economic growth and democratization have been achieved in a mutually reinforcing manner. Our economic growth expedited the process of democratization, and democratization in turn promoted our economic growth.

In the 21st century, in this age of globalization and communication revolution, the tide of democratization is unstoppable regardless of a nation's economic standing.

I believe a vibrant democracy will push forward economic growth in all corners of the world. To assist the developing nations to pursue both democracy and economic growth is indeed the role of the UN.

Mr. President,

The market economy and democracy enabled humankind to fulfil the desire for a better life along with the values of freedom and individual happiness. However, the growing gap between the rich and the poor that unfortunately accompanies today's highly developed market economy calls for a self-reflection of the capitalist system and greater public responsibility.

The growing development gap between the developed and developing countries should not only be addressed as a poverty issue, but also be understood as a potential destabilizing element to international peace. Furthermore, this inequality stands against the global vision of achieving common prosperity for all humankind.

It is only when members of the international community share each other's burden and work together in a mutually complementary manner towards the common good that an "eco-systemic development" of the world can be achieved.

Developed nations must help developing countries to maximize their capacity so that they can achieve economic growth and development on their own. To this end, it is important to foster a global

atmosphere that is conducive to supporting the development of trade, investment, finance and human resources in developing countries.

International aid must focus and provide support in areas that form the basis of economic development in developing countries, such as infrastructure and trade-related capacity building. At the same time, efforts must be made to strengthen the roles of multilateral organizations including the IMF and the World Bank for development assistance. These efforts should be grounded in our sincere belief that the growth of developing countries will provide a valuable growth engine for all, including the developed countries, by expanding global demand as a whole.

Through the global financial crisis in 2008, we have come to realize once again that we live in a highly interconnected world. A financial crisis that started in one place became a global one in an instant. No country was spared from the bitter sting of economic crisis. In the face of the crisis, the G20, a mechanism bringing together both developed and developing nations, was created. Such a crisis can only be addressed effectively by a collective response on a global scale, rather than national or regional efforts.

The 「Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth」 which was adopted last November at the G20 Seoul Summit and the 「G20 Multi-Year Action Plan」 outline specific measures to realize growth that embraces developing countries as partners. As a member of the G20, the Republic of Korea will faithfully and actively implement these measures.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) championed by the UN constitute another important agenda that pursues shared growth between developed and developing nations.

The Government of the Republic of Korea will be an active participant in the international development cooperation as pursued by the MDGs. We will faithfully implement our plan to double our current level of ODA by 2015, and drawing wisdom from our past experiences, will assist developing countries in ways that may enable them to build capacity to achieve genuine growth on their own.

I hope that the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Busan in November this year will provide a valuable opportunity for a new paradigm and partnership for global cooperation to emerge that can effectively address new changes and challenges in international development cooperation.

Mr. President,

The cost of reckless economic growth that ignores environmental warnings is beyond imagination. The rise in the earth's temperature due to greenhouse emissions caused abnormal climatic phenomena. Destruction in the ecosystem brought about by the greenhouse effect is incurring enormous economic damage in various parts of the world.

To protect our environment and promote growth at the same time, we must use less fossil fuel and more renewable energy, while promoting the use of safer nuclear energy. The green technology devoted to meet these goals will create more jobs for people and enable us to attain sustainable economic growth for decades to come.

Having designated "Green Growth" as a national growth paradigm in 2008, the Republic of Korea has been actively pursuing this goal. The Republic of Korea was the first country in the world to introduce the 'Framework Act on Low Carbon, Green Growth.' We are also investing 2% of our national GDP in green sectors every year.

Another important development has been the launch of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) which was founded by the Republic of Korea along with like-minded countries. The aim of the Institute is to share cutting-edge green technology and experience with developing countries. In so doing, developing countries can join in the global green growth movement and attain economic growth and environmental protection together as one global family.

The UN shall have a more important role than ever to play in restoring the equilibrium in the global ecosystem and promoting shared growth in the international community. In this regard, I welcome the inclusion of 'Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication' as a main agenda item for the 2012 UN Rio+20 Conference. I look forward to the conference producing a solid vision and action plan towards economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development.

Mr. President,

The North Korean nuclear threat poses significant challenges to peace on the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia and beyond. The Republic of Korea has consistently exerted diplomatic efforts in cooperation with the international community for the last twenty years to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and will continue to do so.

In the 21st century, we must first work together if we wish to attain peace and prosperity. This is a historical trend and the DPRK must take part.

It is my hope to see the DPRK enjoy peace and prosperity by becoming a responsible member of the international community. When the DPRK chooses the path to mutual benefit and common prosperity, we will be ready to help in this endeavour along with the international community. I sincerely hope that this will transform the Korean Peninsula from a place of conflict and strife into a bedrock of peace in Northeast Asia and the world.

Mr. President,

Today humanity faces a range of transnational challenges previously unknown. These challenges require close international cooperation than ever before. At this historic moment, the UN shall have a greater responsibility and role to play.

Over the past sixty years since the establishment of the UN, the dynamics of international relations have gone through fundamental and structural transformation. To meet the new demands of the times and address the diverse challenges of the future, the UN should constantly strive to renew and reinvent itself.

In particular, the UN Security Council should be reformed to become more democratic and accountable, so that it can fully fulfill its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. The Republic of Korea has been actively participating in discussions on Security Council reform. We will continue to contribute constructively to the discussions in the future.

With the spirit of the UN Charter always in our hearts, the Republic of Korea will continue to actively cooperate with the UN so as to create a greater UN in times of change.

Thank you.