

Keynote Address

by

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Mr. President,

May I first congratulate you on your election as President of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that the current session of the GA will be a fruitful one under your able leadership.

The Republic of Korea is pleased that the UN – in partnership with its member states and under the stewardship of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon – is strengthening multilateralism and successfully responding to the diverse challenges that the international community faces. We are confident that the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Plan will help the UN to keep making important contributions in this period of transformation.

Mr. President,

22 years ago, I was present in this august Assembly to watch with great emotion the historic moment when the Republic of Korea was admitted as a UN member state. That moment came at the end of a long-wait during the Cold War.

At that time, the Republic of Korea solemnly pledged to actively take part in shaping a new global order that is free, fair and prosperous, and where justice and the rule of law prevail.

To live up to this pledge, the Republic of Korea – although a latecomer – has fully embraced the callings of the UN with passion and devotion. In many corners of the world, Korea has actively taken part in peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts. Currently, Korea is serving as a member of the UN Security Council and the Human Rights Council, among others.

Since its inception, the UN has taken on the noble endeavor to help the peoples of the United Nations to live in larger freedom. However, insecurity and inequality, injustice and intolerance still prevail in many parts of the world, and are desperately in need of our common efforts.

Furthermore, the rise of new global challenges such as climate change, terrorism and cybercrime calls for a global cooperation that transcends the existing inter-state system. In other words, the importance and the relevance of the UN is ever increasing, as it is a key vehicle for global cooperation.

Mr. President,

The new administration of the Republic of Korea has put forward its foreign policy vision built on the two fundamental objectives, composed of “happiness of the people” and “happiness of the global community.” Indeed, such a vision resonates with the core values of the UN – peace, human rights, and development.

Korea seeks to make meaningful contributions to maintain global peace beyond the Korean Peninsula. We want to share the fruits of our economic success, which was achieved with the help of the international community, and strive to enhance the dignity and happiness of all global citizens. This, I believe, is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN as well.

The first pillar in attaining global happiness is security. In particular, the Republic of Korea is of the view that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

In this connection, the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by the report of UN investigators, has caused the worst humanitarian disaster in the 21st century. The government of the Republic of Korea condemns the use of chemical weapons in the strongest possible terms, as it constitutes a crime against humanity that cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

In this regard, we welcome the recent agreement between the U.S. and Russia on the “Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons”, and an expected decision by the OPCW and a reinforcing resolution by the Security Council sometime today. We urge the Syrian government to faithfully implement its commitments to the international community. Also, we strongly call upon other countries that have not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), including the DPRK, to do so as soon as possible.

In this context, I must draw your attention to the seriousness of DPRK’s ongoing WMD programs. Despite a series of Security Council resolutions, North Korea launched long-range missiles and conducted nuclear tests as recently as early this year, in blatant violation of its international obligations. The DPRK should strictly implement its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2094, which was emphasized in a recent IAEA resolution on the DPRK.

As is the case with Syria, the international community should forge united efforts to roll back DPRK's nuclear weapons programs to prevent the advent of another nuclear-armed state.

However, if the DPRK decides to give up its so-called parallel pursuit of economic development and nuclear armament, and in turn embarks on a path of genuine change through concrete actions, the Republic of Korea stands ready to help North Korea.

Alongside the proliferation of WMDs, terrorism presents a grave threat to international peace and security in the 21st century. The Republic of Korea strongly condemns the terrorist attack that took place last weekend in Nairobi, Kenya. Our sincere condolences go out to the victims and their families of this tragedy. The Republic of Korea denounces all forms of terrorism, and will continue to take part in the global efforts to combat terrorism.

Mr. President,

Together with its efforts to respond to the imminent security threats including the proliferation of WMDs, the new administration of the Republic of Korea is pursuing a policy called "*trustpolitik*" to establish a regional order of reconciliation and cooperation in the Korean Peninsula as well as in Northeast Asia. *Trustpolitik*, in turn, is implemented through the Korean Peninsula Trust-Building Process and the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative.

The Korean Peninsula Trust-Building Process aspires to safeguard peace based on strong deterrence, while simultaneously building peace through dialogue and cooperation. Through this process, the new administration of the Republic of Korea was able to draw out the resumption of operations in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, the only remaining inter-Korean economic cooperation project.

Furthermore, the Republic of Korea proposes to create a World Peace Park in the world's most heavily armed demilitarized zone (DMZ), in order to transform a lasting legacy of the Cold War and a divided Korea into a new space of peace and harmony. It is my hope that the UN and the two Koreas will work together to bring this proposal to realization, thereby contributing greatly to the building of trust in the Korean Peninsula.

Turning to the larger region of Northeast Asia, Korea is expecting further political and security cooperation that corresponds to the level of economic interdependence in the region.

To this end, the Republic of Korea proposed the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative that will begin with a dialogue on soft issues of common interests to the players in the region. The Republic of Korea is also interested in learning from valuable experiences in successful regional institutions such as the EU, OSCE and ARF.

Mr. President,

The second pillar of an *Era of Global Happiness* is the promotion of human rights and human dignity as the universal value. In the last century, the Republic of Korea went through a colonial occupation and a tragic internecine war. From that experience, Koreans became more appreciative than others of the paramount importance of human rights and humanitarianism.

Worldwide, there is an alarming increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to wars and intra-state conflicts. Concerning the mass-scale refugee problem caused by the Syrian civil war, my government is actively involved in international efforts to assist the refugees. Korea is also planning to co-host a working group meeting on Syrian reconstruction in Seoul next month.

The Republic of Korea also wishes to emphasize the need to uphold the internationally established legal principle of *non-refoulement*.

Mr. President,

Today, there are over 10 million people suffering from the agony of not being able to see their loved ones across the inter-Korean border, even 60 years after the end of the Korean War. Based on the recent agreement between the two Koreas, a reunion for those separated families was to be held this week. However, it is with utmost regret that the DPRK unilaterally cancelled this reunion, which is a humanitarian event in nature, citing political reasons. Such an inhumane decision cannot be justified for any reason. Thus far, the new administration of the Republic of Korea maintained the insulation of humanitarian issues from political considerations. Therefore, I urge the DPRK to convene the family reunion as soon as possible to ease the pain and suffering of the Korean people as a whole.

The Republic of Korea wishes to draw your attention to the increasing need to protect civilians, including women and children, from armed conflicts around the globe. With this in mind, during its Presidency of the Security Council last February, the Republic of Korea chaired an open debate on civilian protection in conflict situations, and is also one of the champions of the newly launched PSVI, Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative. In fact, sexual violence during conflicts is one of the most serious types of human rights violation. It is a war crime that not only destroys the life of the victim, but also that of the victim's family and the community.

In particular, for the victims of sexual violence during conflicts of the last century, the pain and agony continues to this day. What matters most is genuine remorse and concrete actions. As repeatedly emphasized by reports of UN Special Rapporteurs on sexual violence, responsible measures are called for that can restore the victims' honor and soothe their pain, as this is a matter of universal human rights.

Mr. President,

Underdevelopment and extreme poverty are the core challenges facing the UN today. Since the Millennium Summit held in 2000, the collective efforts by the international community to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have yielded some very tangible results.

However, the progress has not been equally enjoyed across different regions, countries and groups of people. It is against this backdrop that we attach great importance to the discussion on the future direction and roadmap of development cooperation, under the theme of "Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage" during this session of the General Assembly.

The next set of common global development goals should be genuinely people-centered by taking into account the standard of well-being beyond the traditional income-levels. The new goals should place the greatest priority in guaranteeing the dignity of all.

Furthermore, the new goals should seek to build partnerships with the newly emerging development actors, so as to effectively utilize the given capacities and resources. The Republic of Korea hopes that the *Busan Global Partnership* launched in 2012 will also play a significant role in setting up a new cooperative mechanism to lead the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Such development goals also coincide with Korea's foreign policy objective of building an *Era of Global Happiness*. The Republic of Korea hopes to work together to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs by pursuing a recipient-oriented development cooperation policy.

More specifically, we will continue to increase our ODA and share our successful development experiences, such as the *Saemaul or New Community Movement*, with developing countries.

In addition, a united response to climate change is critical to achieving global happiness. Korea will actively support the Green Climate Fund (GCF), headquartered in Korea, so that it develops into a significant organization that supports developing countries in responding to climate change and the threats it brings.

