

Statement
by H.E. Cho Tae-yul
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs
at the Ministerial Segment
of the 72nd Session of the United Nations
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific

May 18, 2016

**Mr. Chairman,
Mme. Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me begin by thanking the UNESCAP Secretariat and the Government of Thailand for the excellent preparation of the 72nd Session of the Commission. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important meeting. I am confident that this Session will make meaningful progress under your able leadership.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year, we adopted the *2030 Agenda for*

Sustainable Development, a new milestone for the next fifteen years in our common efforts to build a human society that leaves no one behind, and the future of our planet where nature and humankind coexist in harmony. This year marks the very first year we embark on this fifteen-year long historic voyage.

At this critical juncture, it is quite timely and relevant to select ***Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development*** as the theme of this Session.

As illustrated by the theme of this year's Davos Forum, ***Fourth Industrial Revolution***, the transformation in the field of science and technology in recent years is unprecedented in terms of its scope, breadth and speed. In

order for this wave of transformation to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth in both developed and developing countries, it is important to build capacity for and create an environment conducive to developing and appropriately using science and technology. It is especially an important task in laying the groundwork for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Korea is a living testament to how great a transformation of national economy and individuals' lives can be achieved by science, technology and innovation.

Rising above the ruins of war and absolute poverty, Korea has transformed itself from a

war-stricken aid recipient to a full-fledged donor country within half a century. Building capacity in the field of science, technology and innovation has been the locomotive for the prosperity that Korea is enjoying today. The *Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST)*, the first research institute for science and technology in Korea which was established fifty years ago with funding from Western countries, contributed greatly to the development of science, technology and innovation. It spearheaded the rapid growth of Korea in the 1960s and 70s.

In recent years, however, being faced with new challenges especially arising from an aging society, Korea has been making strenuous efforts to come up with new

solutions based on science, technology and innovation. The case in point is the creative economy that the Park Geun-hye government has been vigorously pursuing since its inauguration three years ago with a view to creating new growth engines by combining creative and innovative ideas of individuals with science and technology.

Based on such experiences of Korea, today I would like to share my thoughts on how to overcome the challenges faced by the Asia-Pacific and achieve sustainable development through science, technology and innovation.

First, a well-designed and focused development strategy needs to be worked out to enhance the capabilities of individuals in

science and technology.

The enhanced capabilities of individuals through education in science and technology, and thereby nurtured human capital in this area constitute the foundation for building national capacity for innovation. They are also a prerequisite for inclusive growth that leaves no one behind.

In order to ensure sustainable growth of developing economies, it is necessary to provide optimal level of education in science and technology with a focus on ICT that is tailored to the different context of each developing country, while nurturing creative human resources in industrial technology.

With this in mind, Korea has taken an initiative to assist developing countries in upgrading their science and technology education, labeled as the *Initiative for Science, Technology and Innovation for Better Life*. Korea also has come up with the *Better Life for Girls Initiative*, an initiative to provide, among others, ICT education for girls, one of the most vulnerable groups in developing countries. Both initiatives were presented by President Park Geun-hye during her visit to UNESCO last December and at the UN Sustainable Development Summit last September respectively. Korea is committed to implementing them faithfully and vigorously.

In addition, we will continue to explore new projects of this kind in the region such as the

Women and ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI) which we have been jointly pursuing with APCICT, and will actively participate in the initiatives to enhance the ICT capacity of Asia-Pacific countries.

Second, a self-sustaining business ecosystem should be nurtured by linking the R&D capacity of research institutions with start-up capacity of businesses.

As pointed out in a recent UNESCAP report, in order to achieve the sustainable development goals, it is important to boost productivity. And to this end, the national R&D capacity should be strengthened and be applicable to the industries. However, some Asia-Pacific countries are experiencing difficulties in

securing growth engines by using science, technology and innovation. It is still a daunting task for many of them to set a strategic link between R&D and business start-ups.

Therefore, our efforts should not stop at educating individuals in science and technology. We must seek creating jobs by linking the national capacity for R&D with business start-ups, and thus create a self-sustaining business ecosystem that can pave the way towards sustainable growth.

It is with this in mind that Korea has been continuously providing assistance for the R&D activities of developing countries tailored to the industrial needs of each country. Projects

such as the *Vietnam-Korea Institute of Science and Technology (V-KIST)* and the *Kathmandu University Research Center* are good examples.

In order to provide more focused and longer-term assistance for developing countries in securing growth engines with science, technology and innovation, Korea also plans to contribute to developing countries 200 million U.S. dollars for five years from 2016 to 2020 through the *Initiative for Science, Technology and Innovation for Better Life* that I mentioned earlier. In particular, we plan to prioritize our assistance to capacity-building in R&D activities and business start-ups that are tailored to the social development and industrial needs of each developing country partner.

Third, more work needs to be done to strengthen public-private partnership (PPP).

An effective public-private partnership has been playing an increasingly important role in recent years as development cooperation engages more and more non-government actors such as private enterprises and civil society organizations.

Against this backdrop, the private sector's capacity for science, technology, and innovation can be effectively used to resolve the range of economic and social problems that developing countries are faced with in their quest for prosperity.

It is in this context that Korea is contributing to devising creative solutions to the various problems faced by developing countries in such areas as health and medicine, education, energy, environment, and rural development, by commercializing the innovative ideas of the private sector through KOICA's *Creative Technology Solution (CTS)* program.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the importance of financing for development in securing sustainable and inclusive growth.

Capacity for mobilizing resources for development financing, together with science, technology and innovation, is the key instrument of implementation for achieving the sustainable development goals.

Given the fact that in the Asia-Pacific, financing and investment are constantly on the rise while the capital market is rapidly growing, the region has great potential to expand financing for development. But in reality, demand for financing for development in the region is greater than its actual capacity due to its high proportion of least developed countries.

In an effort to galvanize the discussions on financing for development in the region, Korea co-hosted with UNESCAP the First High-level Follow-up Dialogue on Financing for Development in Asia and the Pacific in Incheon last March. And in April, a high-level side event was held in New York to present

the outcome of this meeting on the occasion of the 2016 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development.

Korea will also actively take part in the *Addis Tax Initiative* and faithfully implement our pledge to double our technical assistance by 2020 on domestic tax revenue mobilization. Winston Churchill once said, "For a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle." His remarks illustrate how difficult a task it is to increase tax revenues. Korea will continuously provide assistance to developing countries in the region in modernizing their tax administration system and building capacity for mobilizing resources for development financing.

We will also support their efforts to build a financial information system which aims to detect illicit financial flows. It has a significant implication for development financing because illicit financial flows from developing countries in the Asia-Pacific amounted to 482 billion US dollars in 2013, accounting for 40% of the global illicit financial flows and representing a faster growth than in any other region.

Mr. Chairman,

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* encompass social, economic and environmental dimensions and the relevant actors, commitments and implementation tools are unprecedentedly diverse. Therefore,

establishing a harmonious partnership with various actors is essential for achieving the sustainable development goals.

Being aware of the importance of science, technology and innovation as a means to achieve the sustainable development goals, UNESCAP has been leading the regional discussions in this area by establishing the ICT-STI Committee and operating the STI Advisory Council. I hope that UNESCAP will continue to play a leading role in promoting regional cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation and building effective partnerships for sustainable development.

Korea, as the largest donor country to

UNESCAP, is committed to working closely with the ESCAP Secretariat and member states for the sustainable development of the Asia-Pacific region.

Korea's submission of a draft resolution at this meeting urging the member states to hold a regional review related to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) attests to our commitment to contribute to building an Asia-Pacific community where science, technology and innovation serve as new growth engines and solutions to regional challenges.

Thank you. /END/