

UN leadership in addressing climate change

This is Lee Myung-bak, the president of the Republic of Korea.

Climate change is one of the most serious challenges of our time. Yet, beneath this challenge lies a great opportunity - an opportunity to dramatically transform our lives for the better.

For the upcoming Copenhagen meeting, we must renew our determination and take up our respective share of responsibility to make this common effort a success. As an Asian axiom says; "ten spoonfuls of rice add up to a full bowl," collaboration is always crucial and even the smallest contribution should count. What really matters is not the size of the spoon, but the willingness to pitch in.

Korea is now taking active measures for this common task. Within this year, Korea will announce its mid-term greenhouse gas mitigation goal. It will be the first such case among the non-annex 1 countries. Considering that Korea's greenhouse gas emissions almost doubled between 1990 and 2005, the task that lies before us is no small one. But we will carry on.

This challenge can become an opportunity as "Low Carbon Green Growth," which I have set as Korea's new national vision, takes effect. A new and more sustainable path to economic prosperity will come about by way of addressing environmental and energy issues with focused investments on green technologies and industries. Indeed, Korea has launched a 5-year plan for Green Growth, whereby Korea will annually invest 2% of its GDP into the green growth sector.

At every turning point in history, technological breakthroughs have brought forth great changes. This time, transformational technologies such as renewable energy, green vehicles and smart grids will play a pivotal role to that end. These technologies must be shared widely in the spirit of global partnership so that developing countries too can take part in making full use of the opportunity for green growth.

In combating climate change, some may say we still have time and actions can be saved for later.

I am afraid that is not the case. We must act now.

Let us be prepared so that future generations shall say “Yes, they did their best.” Thank you.