



# THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Address**

**by**

**H.E. Park Geun-hye**

**President of the Republic of Korea**

**at**

**the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly  
of the United Nations**

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Keynote Address  
by H.E. Park Geun-Hye  
President of the Republic of Korea

at the 69th Session of  
the General Assembly of the United Nations  
September 24, 2014, New York

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Fellow Delegates,

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. Kutesa, on your election as President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. I am confident that this session will make meaningful progress under your able leadership.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts to tackle the numerous challenges breaking out across the globe.

**(United Nations and Global Governance)**

Next year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

I am prompted by the state of our world today, to reflect once again upon the noble dreams and ideals that inspired the founders of the United Nations seventy years ago.

The founders aspired to build a new world that places people at the center, as the opening words of the UN Charter, 'We the Peoples,' remind us.

Throughout the ensuing decades of the Cold War and post-Cold War era, the UN has been tackling countless crises, striving as it did so, to fulfill its purpose of maintaining international peace, promoting development, and upholding human rights.

Yet, our world continues to be beset with widespread disputes and conflicts – both large and small – despite the efforts of the UN.

Civil conflicts raging on in Syria, Libya and South Sudan are leading to the deaths of untold numbers of innocent women and children.

In Iraq and surrounding areas, the activities of foreign terrorist fighters are posing new threats to peace internationally, not to mention in the Middle East.

The fragile ceasefire in Gaza and Ukraine call for a more fundamental and lasting solution.

The recent Ebola outbreak in Africa, widespread poverty and natural disasters, together underscore how humanity is under threat from multiple challenges.

The need to push back against these harmful challenges to peace and development beckons us to return to the UN's founding spirit of putting people first and promoting cooperation among the family of nations.

And to meet the aspirations of the international community for justice and common prosperity, the UN needs to continue playing a central role for arranging more rapid and efficient responses.

**(Three key objectives of the UN)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Korea was founded in 1948 with the blessing of the UN. It was able to safeguard freedom and democracy during the Korean War that broke out two years later, again with the help of the UN.

Once a country that barely managed to survive with the UN's assistance, the Republic of Korea is today a nation that has achieved both an advanced market economy and democracy.

And in the course of that journey, the Republic of Korea came to espouse the values upheld by the UN - peace, development and human rights – as its own vision.

Given its history, the Republic of Korea is no stranger to the agonies of civil war, aggression, poverty and humanitarian disasters that are unfolding around the world.

This is why Korea is actively working to serve international peace, promote human rights and sustainable development, as a member of the three major councils of the UN – the Security Council, Human Rights Council, and Economic and Social Council.

### **(International Peace)**

Developments unfolding in the Middle East, Eurasia, and Northeast Asia are a far cry from the peaceful and just world that was envisioned by the UN's founders.

Overcoming the instability and chaos we see today must start with our adherence to the fundamental order and norms of the international community. That is, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, refraining from the threat or use of force in violation of the UN Charter, and respect for human rights and humanitarian values.

We need to prevent the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons, which pose a fundamental threat to international peace and security.

In this regard, we welcome the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons through the joint efforts of the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as well as the progress being made in addressing the Iranian nuclear issue.

By the same token, I would underline the urgency of resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, which presents the single-greatest threat to peace on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia.

The DPRK is the only country to have conducted a nuclear test in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Its nuclear program is not only a serious threat to international peace, but also amounts to a total rejection of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the backbone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The DPRK must make the decision to give up its nuclear weapons.

The DPRK should follow in the footsteps of other countries that have abandoned their nuclear weapons in favor of reform and opening, and choose a different path that supports its economic development and improves the lives of its people.

Should it choose to do so, the Republic of Korea, together with the international community, will provide our strong support for developing the DPRK economy.

In addition to this serious challenge on the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia is undergoing a difficult transition.

There are growing tensions in the region surrounding issues of history, territory and maritime security. Yet, unlike other regions, Northeast Asia lacks a mechanism for dealing with these problems through multilateral consultations.

It is against this backdrop that I am seeking to advance a Northeast Peace and Cooperation Initiative that is aimed at building an order of trust and cooperation in the region.

In my view, building up habits of cooperation in practical areas, such as climate action, disaster relief, nuclear safety, and tackling transnational crime, can materialize into a multilateral process of cooperation along the lines of what we see in Europe.

In this context, I have also proposed creating a Northeast Asia nuclear safety consultative body to discuss nuclear safety issues – a topic of shared interest for the countries in the region.

At the same time, we are reaching beyond Northeast Asia and seeking to build transportation and energy networks across an economically inter-dependent Eurasia, which would help strengthen political and security trust across the continent.

**(Human Rights)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks 20 years since the Rwanda genocide - the world's greatest humanitarian tragedy of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The international community had pledged 'never again' in the aftermath of the genocides in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990s. Yet, we are witnessing today a different type of humanitarian disaster unfolding in Syria and Iraq.

The Republic of Korea is actively participating in the efforts of the UN to prevent such humanitarian tragedies.

The Republic of Korea strongly supports UN policies to protect human rights, such as, in particular, the Rights up Front initiative and Open Gate Policy that the Secretary-General is leading.

Even as we speak, Korean troops are taking part in UN peacekeeping missions in South Sudan and Lebanon, helping with peace-building, reconstruction, and the protection of civilians and human rights.

The Republic of Korea also attaches great importance to preventing the humanitarian suffering of women and children, in particular, who are most vulnerable in conflict situations.

In this context, during its presidency of the UN Security Council in February 2013, Korea chaired an open session on civilian protection in conflict situations and helped raise global awareness. Korea is also participating in the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) as a champion state. Sexual violence against women during armed conflicts is a clear violation of human rights and humanitarian norms, regardless of how far back or where it occurred.

The human rights situation in the DPRK is also the subject of profound interest and concern for the international community.

Last March, the UN Human Rights Council adopted the recommendations in the report of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on human rights in the DPRK. The DPRK and the international community should take the necessary measures to implement these recommendations.

In this regard, the UN office that will soon be set up in the Republic of Korea to investigate human rights abuses in the DPRK is expected to reinforce such efforts.

The international community should also pay greater attention to the human rights situation of North Korean defectors. Relevant UN agencies and countries should provide the necessary support so that defectors can freely choose their resettlement destinations.

#### **(Development, Education, and Environment)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges facing humanity today, such as absolute poverty and climate change, can only be addressed through concerted international response, given their complexity and intertwined character.

Less than 500 days remain until the target date of the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs), which was launched with the goal of eradicating absolute poverty and increasing social and economic opportunities.

The Republic of Korea is ready to play a bridging role between developed and developing countries as the post-2015 development goals are being set, by harnessing our unique historical experience.

In this regard, the decision was made to develop the Busan Global Partnership into an international development cooperative mechanism at the Ministerial Meeting that was held last April in Mexico.

The Republic of Korea will seek to enhance the quality of its overseas assistance. We will continue to share our development experience, by globally promoting the

Saemaul movement model, which conduced to eradicating rural poverty in Korea through the spirit of diligence, self-reliance and cooperation.

Having seen the power of education in propelling its own development, the Republic of Korea strongly supports – as a Champion - the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI).

Korea will share its lessons-learned and provide substantive support to the UN's initiatives on education, which is one of the main themes of the post-2015 development goals.

To this end, Korea will host the World Education Forum (WEF) in 2015 and make efforts to reach an agreement on the new education objectives for the next fifteen years.

Climate change is no less an existential threat to humanity than the question of war and peace.

At yesterday's Climate Summit, leaders rallied their collective resolve to reach a consensus on the post-2020 new climate regime.

Going forward, an agreement must be reached on a new climate regime by the 2015 Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Paris.

As the host country of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Green Growth Global Institute (GGGI), Korea is committed to supporting international efforts to strengthen developing countries' mitigation and adaptation capacities.

Above all, we will continue to work for the full and early operationalization of the GCF and for the expansion of GGGI's assistance to developing countries.

Korea views the climate challenge, not as a burden, but an opportunity to unleash new value, markets and jobs through technology innovation. We are nurturing new energy industries.

And we hope to share the fruits of our efforts with other developing countries.

## **(Inter-Korean Relations and Reunification)**

Mr. President,  
Fellow delegates,

The Korean people gained independence 69 years ago, but the subsequent division of the Korean Peninsula precluded its membership in the UN as a single sovereign state.

The two Koreas were separately admitted as member states to the UN in 1991. Having two separate seats despite a single language, culture and history is clearly not normal.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. But the Korean Peninsula remains stifled by a wall of division.

Countless separated families have been spending decades in agony, longing to see their loved ones.

I call on the international community to stand with us in tearing down the world's last remaining wall of division.

Not long ago, I proposed to the DPRK that we build corridors that can connect our environment, our livelihoods, and our culture.

In my view, a genuine community that can heal the wounds of division and move the both sides forward together, will only come about when people from the South and the North are able to live in natural harmony within a single ecosystem, when separated families are able to come together and ease their agony, and when culture is shared.

Today, the Korean Peninsula is divided by a 4km wide and 250km long demilitarized zone (DMZ). This DMZ, built around the military demarcation line to prevent renewed conflict, in reality ended up preventing the back-and-forth of people for some sixty years.

But from the stretches of the DMZ would emerge, in those decades, a treasure trove of nature's wildlife.

The DMZ's eco-system is a testament to the fact that the South and North are part of a single whole, one which both sides should work together to restore.

And so I hope to build inside the very symbol of our division a World Eco-Peace Park that would start reconnecting the Peninsula's divided nature and divided people.

If we sweep away barbed-wire fences from small tracts inside the DMZ and thereby allow people from both sides to live in natural harmony, the World Eco-Peace Park will emerge as a corridor of life and peace.

I call on the UN to spearhead these efforts. Building a park that embodies respect for international norms and values, and doing so under UN auspices with all the parties to the war on board - the two Koreas, the US and China —, would serve the cause of easing tensions and peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

A unified Korea will be the starting point for a world without nuclear weapons, offer a fundamental solution to the North Korean human rights issue, and help unlock a stable and cooperative Northeast Asia.

Just as the unification of Germany laid the grounds for a new Europe by integrating Europe, a unified Korea will set in motion a new Northeast Asia.

I am confident that a peacefully reunified Korean Peninsula will contribute to realizing the founding purposes and values espoused by the UN.

**(Conclusion)**

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The founders of the UN were not deterred by the heat of war from looking to the future and planning for a peaceful post-war world.

The Republic of Korea is committed to a vision of diplomacy that seeks lasting peace and unification in the Peninsula, peace and development in Northeast Asia, and contributes to building a happier world.

The Republic of Korea will do its part in the noble journey to ensure that the UN continues to safeguard our common values and cements its place at the center of global governance.

Thank you.