**North Korea Opens Fourteen Special Economic Zones Nationwide**

North Korea announced that it has opened fourteen special economic zones (SEZs) in various provinces this year.

The *Rodong Sinmun,* officialnewspaper of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) covered the news about the Pyongyang International Conference on Special Economic Trade Zone held from October 16 to 17, 2013. This conference was convened by the Korean Economic Development Commission.

According to the newspaper, a law professor from Kim Il Sung University, Dr. Kang Jong Nam, presented at the conference and said, “There are four well-known special economic zones in our country: the Rason Economic and Trade Zone, Hwanggumpyong and Wiwha Islands Economic Zones, Kaesong Industrial Complex, and Mount Kumgang International Tourism Zone. But from this year, fourteen new economic zones were established.” However, details on where these fourteen new SEZs are located were not disclosed.

Kang added, “To meet the growing demands for development, operation and management of new economic development zones, increasing legal measures are being taken to reinforce the development with establishment of new laws or amendment of existing laws.”

North Korean leader and Chairman of the National Defence Commission Kim Jong Un made a statement at the WPK Central Committee meeting in early March, saying that economic development zones be established in each province, taking into consideration the special characteristics of each region.

Experts confirmed that North Korea has officially announced its plans to develop Wonsan and Chilbosan as tourism zones this year. SEZ development of Kangryong District in Southern Hwanghae Province began from last July.

In addition, the Korean Central News Agency announced on October 17 that ‘Kaesong High-Tech Industrial Park’ will be jointly developed by North Korea and foreign consortium, and this is likely to be one of the new fourteen SEZs built this year.

North Korea is actively hosting international forums targeted to attract foreign investment into the country, with experts from Canada, Malaysia, the United States and other foreign countries attending.

The *Rodong Sinmun* also quoted Director Choe Hyon Chol of the Korean Association of Economic Development: “It is crucial to educate and train experts to work in the economic zones and this will be the next step for the development of SEZs.” He also said that “We are willing to participate in various functions such as international forums, investment briefings, and exhibitions to encourage more international investment and cooperation.”

Meanwhile, on October 21 the KCNA reported on the extended cabinet plenary meeting. At the meeting, reports were given on the performance of the third quarter of the national economic plan and measures to successfully implement the plans for the fourth quarter. The central agenda for the last quarter is increasing production of coal and steel products and improving agricultural and light industries to resolve the shortage of food and consumer goods for the people. In addition, improvement in education, health services, and sports sectors were named as imperative areas to recover the country’s status as a powerful socialist nation. Specific tasks and strategies of the fourth quarter were presented at the meeting for the implementation of the national budget.