

Welcoming Remarks by Mr. Hong Jong-ki,
Deputy Minister for Trade Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and Trade on the occasion of the APEC Business
and Climate Change and
2nd Asia Region Climate and Energy Workshops

Ambassador Jan Adams

Dr. Harlan Watson,

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Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the wake of the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol early this year, the global community has embarked upon a full-fledged deliberation on the issue of implementation pertaining to climate change mitigation and adaptation. I believe that now is the rightful moment to consult for collaboration between the public and industrial sector in their common struggle against climate change, and to ponder over the nexus between climate change and energy demand. On behalf of the government of the Republic of Korea, I would above all like to convey my profound gratitude to the co-sponsors of today's Workshop, namely the governments of Australia, the United States and Japan. I am deeply elevated that this Workshop is being graced by the presence of experts from the APEC member economies as well as representatives from regional organizations including Asian Development Bank and UNESCAP.

On top of the national policy measures of each government, the implementation of mandates in the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol is also heavily reliant on global emissions trading, joint implementation and clean development mechanism incorporated in the so-called flexibility mechanisms. It is anticipated that the business sector will not stay tied up in mere involvement in domestic policies and measures. Instead, the business sector is expected to take a huge leap forward by playing a leading role to promote market creation, investment and sustainable development in the course of implementing flexibility mechanisms. In this regard, it goes without saying that a partnership between the government and the business sector is pivotal in addressing climate change concerns.

The Korean government has been actively engaged in the efforts and has worked closely with the industry sector to bring about greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions abatement through various means including the control of energy demand, emissions reduction efforts in the energy supply sector as well as agricultural and industrial waste management programs, to name a few. The Korean government remains committed to successful establishment and implementation of policies and measures conducive to GHG emissions mitigation by investing approximately US\$ 20 billion during the third Comprehensive Action Plan, which is effective from 2005 to 2007. Plans are also under way to establish the foundation to encourage and enhance broad participation in the flexibility mechanisms.

Taking into consideration that the overwhelming majority of the total greenhouse gas emissions is attributable to the proportion of GHG emissions by the energy sector, we may well presume that there is intimate correlation between climate change and energy. As for the Republic of Korea, the proportion of greenhouse gas emissions contributed by the energy sector accounts for more than 80 per cent of total GHG emissions of the nation. This fact alone attests to the particular attention given by the Korean government on the issues expected to be dealt during the next 3 days at this APEC Workshop.

I would now turn to one of the overarching issues that lie ahead: deliberation on the regime beyond 2012. Consensus has been reached at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC last December on the need for future discussions pertinent to cooperative international measures against climate change in the post-Kyoto era. The Korean government acknowledges the climate change concerns as a common interest of mankind which needs to be urgently addressed. Based on such recognition, and on the premise that the future climate change regime ensures broad participation of both developed and developing countries, the government of the Republic of Korea remains firm in its conviction to constructively take part in the international deliberation over cooperative mechanisms for the post-Kyoto regime. The Republic of Korea deems it appropriate that the future regime embraces the various principles stipulated in the UNFCCC.

Moreover, it is the view of the Korean government that flexible and multiple options such as a diversified approach based on different circumstances of the countries concerned, and the introduction of the decoupling concept which delinks the growth of GHG emissions from economic growth should be at the heart of future regime beyond 2012.

Given the nature of global consequences of climate change, it is worth taking note that not enough attention has been given to the needs for concerted actions at the regional level while much has been stressed about global actions in approaching the issue of climate change. Accordingly, it is very encouraging to witness the growing regional responses within the purview of APEC, which plays a pivotal role in the Asian-Pacific region. I hope that this Workshop will mark a significant step forward in the search for cooperative measures in addressing climate change concerns among the APEC member economies. I truly wish that this gathering will provide a platform to deliberate on possible means that will effectively complement worldwide efforts towards the cause of combating climate change. Thank you.

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