

## PLANS FOR STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC COOPERATION TO BUILD AN ASIA-PACIFIC COMMUNITY

*The following is the address given by President Kim Young Sam of the Republic of Korea on November 25, 1996, at the 1996 APEC Economic Leaders Meeting held in Manila, the Philippines.*

### *Greetings*

**D**istinguished APEC leaders, It is a great pleasure to meet with you again.

First, I would like to express my deep appreciation to President Fidel Ramos and the Philippine Government and people for their successful preparations for this meeting.

At the same time, I would like to welcome Prime Minister John Howard of Australia, who is attending the APEC Leaders Meeting for the first time. I would also like to heartily congratulate President Bill Clinton of the United States and Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan on their reelections.

### *Liberalization of Trade and Investment*

**S**ince the APEC Leaders Meeting in Seattle in 1993, liberalization of trade and investment in the region has made great progress. In particular, the Manila Action Plan, which is being presented at this meeting, contains important plans. The Republic of Korea, too, has included substantial actional plans to be carried out by 2000, including the liberalization of

foreign investment, relaxation of regulations and protection of intellectual property.

It is now time, I think, for the APEC leaders to try and ensure that such liberalization plans provide practical assistance to businessmen in the region. The APEC Businessmen's Forum (ABF) initiated by President Ramos is a good example of such efforts.

### *Building an APEC Community*

**T**o overcome the heterogeneity of APEC member nations and consolidate an awareness of community, the joint development of human resources, the sharing of developmental know-how and the expansion of economic cooperation are as important as liberalization. To that end, I would like to suggest a number of ideas.

First, we should develop cooperative plans for the joint development of human resources. For this, we have to activate as soon as possible the APEC Education Fund, which we agreed to at the Osaka Meeting last year. In so doing, we would be able to hand our vision over to the upcoming generation. We would, more-

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over, be able to help scholars study and plan for a better future for APEC.

I would like to make it clear here that the Republic of Korea is steadily preparing to set up the secretariat of the Fund and is ready to offer its share of financial assistance for its activation.

At the same time, we should strengthen cooperation in science and technology, especially for the next generation. Such cooperation would not only help develop human resources but also raise the developmental capacity of all member nations. In this connection, the Republic of Korea proposed an APEC Advanced Science and Technology Network and a Science Festival for Asia-Pacific Youth at the APEC Science and Technology Ministers Conference held in Seoul two weeks ago.

Business projects for training industrial workers in the region should also be actively promoted. Exchanges of workers for training would directly contribute to the development of human resources.

Second, we should utilize the capabilities of businesses to the fullest extent for the development of the APEC region. The construction of infrastructure, which has been the responsibility of governments until now, requires the broad participation of private companies. For this, we have to steadily improve business conditions and provide an institutional mechanism to minimize the risk for various investments.

Korean companies are already participating actively in industrial projects and the development of infrastructure in the region. The Republic of Korea Government has begun to

drastically improve the business climate so that companies from other APEC member nations can engage in vigorous business activities in South Korea.

Along with this, the Asia-Pacific Information Infrastructure (APII) which the Republic of Korea has proposed, has to be built up solidly so that private companies can effectively utilize their abilities. Companies can only make effective decisions when business information is communicated quickly.

#### *Concluding Remarks*

At the APEC conference in Osaka last year, I proposed that we, the APEC Leaders, "do our best to complete the building of our 'common house,' for the Asia-Pacific region's overall prosperity" through APEC which now provides the basic framework for regional cooperation. It is now time for us to furnish the "common house." I hope that APEC will now proceed to undertake substantial work through the Manila Action Plan for APEC (MAPA) proposed at this meeting and other APEC community projects.

In closing, I would like to stress that we should always keep in mind the supremacy of multilateralism based on open regionalism, which APEC member nations are advocating. This, I believe, conforms with the rapidly progressing trend of globalization.

Thank you.

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