

**Dinner Speech by H.E. Ban Ki-moon,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade
For the Delegations to the 2005 OSCE-Korea Conference**

Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel,
Secretary General Jan Kubis,
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is indeed a great honor for me to host this dinner for all the delegations to the 2005 OSCE-Korea Conference. On behalf of the Korean government, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you here tonight. Our heartfelt thanks go to the OSCE Secretariat for their full cooperation to ensure the success of this Conference.

Korea's co-hosting of the OSCE Conference for the second time is a demonstration of our strong commitment to cooperative relations with the OSCE.

I personally have a special attachment to the OSCE. During my tenure as Ambassador to Austria in 1998-1999, I enjoyed excellent working relations with the Secretariat as well as good friendships with many representatives to the OSCE.

When I recall those days, what comes to mind is my involvement in the decision to dispatch an election observation team to Bosnia in September 1998, and decision to hold the first regional conference between Korea-OSCE in 2001. For this reason and others, furthering cooperation between Korea and the OSCE is a goal very close to my heart.

(The Objective of the 2005 OSCE-Korea Conference)

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am delighted to note that this Conference has a timely and useful agenda, well reflecting the need for a new security paradigm to deal with the new security threats of the 21st century.

Sharing experiences and taking actions from a common stance is the key to coping with new security threats. In this connection, you deserve full recognition for the constructive perspectives and insights you have presented during the Conference

(The OSCE and Northeast Asia)

I have high expectations that you will continue to put forward new ideas and creative suggestions on the issue of the new security paradigm in Northeast Asia, which is the topic for tomorrow.

The OSCE's experiences serve as a successful model for multilateral security cooperation in this part of the world. The history of the OSCE has inspired the peoples of Northeast Asia to envision a regional security regime of our own.

As you are well aware, the scope for conflict and tension in Northeast Asia is real. The burden of painful historical legacies and pressing issues, such as the North Korean nuclear program, continue to hang over the region.

Recently my government has put forth a new strategic vision to take a more proactive role in promoting peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia. This new policy initiative is aimed at removing lingering mistrust and building confidence for genuine cooperation and reconciliation within the region.

Thanks to globalization, this region has shown promising signs, such as growing interdependence in the regional economy and the steady expansion of people-to-people exchanges. We will capitalize on these encouraging phenomena to nurture broader regional cooperation.

With regard to the North Korean nuclear issue, we are redoubling our efforts to bring North Korea back to the Six-Party Talks and encourage it to make the strategic decision to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

Once the nuclear issue is peacefully resolved, we envisage that the Six-Party Talks will eventually evolve into a multilateral security mechanism to deal with various common security issues across the region.

(Mt. Kumgang Tour Program / Inter-Korean CBMs)

I note that many of you will join the field trip to Mt. Kumgang scheduled for the day after tomorrow. As you are aware, the Mt. Kumgang Tourism Project is one of the key inter-Korean initiatives representing a Korean version of a form of Confidence-Building Measure on the Korean Peninsula. I hope that tomorrow's visit will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of the Korean government's patient endeavors to encourage North Korea to open up more to the outside world.

(Conclusion)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all know, this year is a significant one for the OSCE as it marks the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act as well as the 10th anniversary of the rebirth of the organization as the OSCE.

I am confident that this Conference will generate fresh momentum for strengthening the cooperative partnership between the OSCE member countries and its Asian Partners.

Taking this opportunity, I wish to reaffirm Korea's full support and assistance for the work of the OSCE as a Partner for Cooperation.

Before closing, I would like to add a personal wish for every one of you here. Please do enjoy your stay in Seoul and take with you pleasant memories of our vibrant city.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Let me propose a toast to the continued success of this Conference, to our everlasting friendship, and to the health of all of you!

Thank you very much.