

KAESONG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: GROWING SIZE AND VALUE

The number of North Korean workers in the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) is growing at a rate of 22 percent, while production is increasing at 36 percent per month.

A report released by the Ministry of Unification on April 26 stated explained that as of April 21, there were 1,047 DPRK construction workers and 4,918 DPRK factory workers for a total of 6,589 North Koreans employed at the complex. The first North Koreans were hired in November 2004, and have since then been growing at a rate of 22 percent per month.

Among these, apparel maker Shinwon and two other factories in the pilot project have already sent forty-one workers to China in order to receive technical training, and from May, sock producer Sungwha Moolsan expects to send twelve representatives to China for five months of technical training.

Ko Gyeong-bin, Director General of the Kaesong Industrial Complex Project Office, stated that “Some North Korean workers took annual leave after working for over one year,” and that, “120 workers have already taken leave and returned to work.” As the number of industries increases and the rate of operation grows, the amount of goods produced is experiencing explosive growth.

According to Ko, between December 2004, when the first products rolled of the production lines, until the end of March this year, KIC output totaled 27.46 million USD, growing at an average of 36 percent per month. With production toping five million USD in March, recent month-to-month growth is at 40 percent.

Currently eleven out of fifteen factories in the KIC pilot project are producing goods, with the

remaining four expected to be in operation by July. In addition, of twenty-four enterprises slated for Stage 1, two are already constructing factories and another sixteen companies are scheduled to begin work in the first half of this year.

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