

Remarks at the Opening of the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government

Your Excellencies President Lula da Silva of Brazil, President Emomali Rakhmonov of Tajikistan, and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand, the Honorable Undersecretary General Jose Antonio Ocampo of the United Nations, national delegates and distinguished guests,

Congratulations on the opening of the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government. I wholeheartedly welcome all of the participants from 140 countries and international organizations.

The interest in and enthusiasm for the Global Forum on Reinventing Government appear to increase with every passing year. Now it has become the largest festival of innovation in the global village; here the experience of every government is shared.

I am pleased that such a significant forum is being held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea. I am thankful to the staff of the UN, the co-sponsor of the forum.

Distinguished guests from home and abroad,

Korea has grown into the world's 10th largest economy after achieving rapid economic growth in the last half century. In that process, the Government led the economy by mobilizing human and material resources in an impeccable manner.

However, as we faced the financial crisis in late 1997, we came to keenly see the limits inherent in such an intensive growth strategy. We thus came to realize the need for innovation-led development. These days, not only the Government but also political, economic, social and all other sectors have been creating engines of national development through innovation.

The goal Korea pursues in initiating innovation in government is to create a government that is efficient, a government that serves, a government that is transparent, a government that respects its citizens, and a government that is decentralized. In this way, it is our goal to make the government perform well, matching the competitiveness of the world's 10th largest economy.

The Presidential Committee on Government Innovation & Decentralization under the

Participatory Government has built an innovation management system and mapped out a 100-point innovation roadmap. One by one, visible progress is being made.

Above all, the Administration is being steered systematically, thereby enhancing efficiency and predictability. Social conflict management and the crisis management system have been strengthened while new systems governing the management of policy quality, results and publicity are being built.

Budget formulation has been transformed into a top-down formula as part of the ongoing process of expanding autonomy among government ministries and agencies. Public posts have been opened up and inter-ministry exchanges are being promoted in a manner that helps enhance professionalism and makes the best possible use of manpower.

The e-government initiative, to which I am very committed, is rated fifth in the world, and substantial improvements will be made.

The decentralization initiative has also been yielding real results, not just slogans. A total of 656 functions of the central government have been transferred to the provinces, while the relocation of central government ministries and public agencies to provincial areas is being pushed with strong resolve.

Distinguished guests,

Innovation initiatives in all social sectors will be expedited along with innovation in government.

First of all, a transparent and fair market system is being built through steady market reform. Substantive endeavors are being made to remove unreasonable regulations and improve the environment for foreign investors.

Substantial progress has been made in our drive to build a transparent society free of corruption. No longer is there any collusion between politicians and business leaders. Last March, leaders from civic organizations, business, political parties and the Government joined forces in sealing an agreement to build a transparent society. Such endeavors to arrive at a consensus through dialogue and develop it into a social pledge are expected to spread to every corner of society including labor and management.

Distinguished guests,

I am convinced that our pursuit of government innovation will succeed without fail.

The fact is that a culture of learning has taken hold in the public, while successful cases in innovation have been rapidly publicized. The Cabinet and I have been spearheading innovation.

Above all, the greatest reason for my conviction is the Korean people. The high motivation of Koreans to achieve, their willingness to carry out what has been decided, and their creative competency and search for the latest novelty will ensure success.

Distinguished participants,

We in the global community have to compete in many areas, but there are, indeed, many areas where we should pool our energy and share as neighbors.

The Republic of Korea will positively join forces in the international commitment to reinvent government. The OECD Asian Center for Public Governance will open next month, and Korea will give special attention to the establishment of an international agency to extend support for the development of governance in every country.

I expect that this Forum will serve as a precious opportunity to design a better government and a better future. I hope that you will have a pleasant and rewarding time during your stay here.

Thank you.