

**Remarks by H.E. Ban Ki-moon,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
at Luncheon  
Organized by GRULAC Ambassadors**

**- 30 June, 2005 -  
Seoul**

Your Excellency Alfredo Ungo, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Korea,  
Distinguished Ambassadors of GRULAC,  
Respected Colleagues,

## ■ Introduction

It is indeed a great honor and privilege for me to be here with all of you at this gathering of Ambassadors from Latin America and the Caribbean.

I would first like to express my deep gratitude to Ambassador Ungo for organizing this wonderful luncheon with the aim of deepening the mutual understanding between us still further.

## ■ Korea's Relations with Latin America

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations with Latin-American countries in the 1960's, Korea has fostered friendly and cooperative relations with the Latin-American and the Caribbean countries in various fields. Our cooperation has been growing ever stronger in recent years and will continue to do so as we work together to our mutual benefit.

Since the visit of President Roh to three South American countries (Argentina, Brazil and Chile) last November, we have witnessed considerable growth in our cooperative ties in a whole range of fields spanning trade, finance and investment, natural resource development and cooperation in the IT industry.

One of the most exciting examples of our growing close ties has been the rapid increase in commercial exchanges between Korea and Latin America. The trade volume rose from 1.5 billion US dollars in 1981 to 18.2 billion US dollars in 2004, and is expected to exceed 20 billion dollars for the first time this year.

This upcoming autumn, Korea is to conduct another round of summit diplomacy with Mexico and eight other countries in Central America and the Caribbean. I am confident that President Roh's visit to this region will serve to boost not only Korea's bilateral relations with the countries concerned, but also broader cooperative relations with Latin America as a whole. I therefore count strongly on your cooperation and support for the success of the visit by President Roh to the region.

The Korea-Chile FTA marked an epoch-making step forward to the mutual benefit of both countries. Moreover, the Korea-Chile FTA enabled Korea to broaden negotiations on FTAs with other countries as well as initiate a joint feasibility study on an EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) with Mexico. Furthermore, Korea and MERCOSUR are trying to broaden their relations by forging a thriving trade agreement.

Korea's entry into the IDB last March is providing valuable opportunities for Korea to expand regional cooperation. Moreover, Korea is seeking to gain official membership in the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) in order to nurture close economic cooperation with Central American countries. I believe that this kind of financial cooperation will enable us to contribute to economic and social development in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Distinguished Ambassadors!

Please allow me now to touch briefly on two key issues : the North Korean nuclear issue and UN reform.

#### ■ North Korean Nuclear Issue

With regard to the North Korean nuclear issue, one year has passed since the last round of the Six-Party Talks was held. In spite of disappointing responses from North Korea early this year, a successful outcome was achieved in the recent summit meeting between President Bush and President Roh, reinforcing our determination to reach a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the nuclear issue. With this solid position shared by the US, Korea is playing a proactive role in inducing North Korea to return to the Six-Party Talks.

It is very encouraging to note that at the meeting with Korean Unification Minister Chung, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il mentioned that North Korea is willing to return to the Talks even in July if it is ascertained that the US has a firm intention to recognize and respect North Korea. In view of the particular nature of the North Korean regime, Chairman Kim Jong-il's remarks may be accepted as a meaningful gesture.

We are making every effort, in close cooperation with other participating countries, to ensure that such momentum generated between the two Koreas leads to the early resumption of the talks.

It is my hope that, with coordinated diplomatic maneuvers among participating countries, substantial progress will be made in the nuclear talks.

#### ■ UN Reform

Finally, I would like to share with you my views on UN Security Council reform.

As you will all agree, the reform of the UN Security Council is highly critical for the future maintenance of peace and security in the world. The Korean government takes the view that the Security Council needs to be reformed under the guiding principles of representativeness,

effectiveness, democratic participation and accountability.

For this, we believe that the number of elected seats in the Security Council, not permanent seats, should be expanded.

The Korean government is also of the view that any decision concerning Security Council reform should be made on the basis of the broadest possible consensus to avoid divisiveness and confrontation in the UN.

In this regard, we share the serious concern about certain countries' attempts to force a vote on a draft resolution aiming at an increase of permanent seats in the absence of the broadest possible consensus.

I am aware that a majority of Latin Americans share with Korea the same view, favoring reform reflecting a more equitable and widely acceptable formula. I earnestly hope that we will continue to cooperate closely for possible consensus on the substance and modification of Security Council reform.

#### ■ Closing Remarks

Distinguished Ambassadors!

Over the last four decades Korea and Latin America have collaborated to lay the groundwork for the bonds of friendship that we enjoy today. As we share greater common interests and a deeper mutual understanding, the prospects for still more mutually beneficial ties are bright. I sincerely hope that we will work together closely to upgrade our relations in a more harmonious and prosperous 21st century.

May I now propose a toast to your health, the success of your missions and everlasting friendships between Korea and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you (Muchas Gracias!)