

PARK GEUN-HYE

President of the Republic of Korea

President of IFRI Thierry de Montbrial
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I offer my sincere congratulations on the opening of the 7th World Policy Conference.

Since its launch in 2008, the World Policy Conference has been a blue-ribbon forum spearheading discussions on global governance.

I find it very meaningful that Asia is hosting the first-ever WPC to be held outside of Europe, here in Seoul.

Today, we are joined by prominent figures from the political, business, and academic communities.

We look forward to the wise insights that these leaders will be bringing to the discussion table regarding major global issues and how the world should move forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our complex and interconnected world of today is intricately intertwined, rather like a spider's web. These are times when events happening in faraway countries – places from which we had been insulated in the past - can have enormous impacts on our own lives.

The fact that no country is free from the threat posed by the recent Ebola outbreak in Africa is a case in point.

Persistent poverty and large-scale natural disasters resulting from climate change are also serious challenges to mankind.

The recently intensifying national, religious, and geopolitical conflicts underscore how such conflicts cannot be resolved by one country alone, or several countries for that matter.

Despite the “never again” pledge by the international community in the aftermath of the genocides in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990's, we are currently witnessing further humanitarian disasters unfolding in Syria and Iraq.

Geopolitical conflicts such as the crisis in Ukraine are even giving rise to concerns that the world is returning to the Cold War era.

Such political risks are also having a negative impact on the global economy.



Although the world economy is gradually recovering from the global financial crisis of 2008, it has yet to recover its pre-crisis growth levels due to prolonged recessions in major economies and falling market confidence.

A faltering economy can even shake our faith in the universal values of humankind, such as democracy, human rights and the market economy.

But it is at times like these that the world must be ever truer to its most fundamental values and act together as one community to meet these challenges.

We must double down on our adherence to the values that are universal to humanity, such as human rights and democracy, and build further trust and cooperation among countries and various other actors.

At the recent ASEM, APEC, EAS, and G20 summits, leaders agreed to pursue various measures to achieve global peace and security and make the global economy more resilient.

At these summits, I highlighted the importance of improving global governance and strengthening global economic resilience through more creative economies, deregulation, and public sector reform – a view widely shared by many leaders.

I hope that such consensus among leaders will serve as a catalyst for renewing global political and economic governance and promoting peace and happiness for humankind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Korea is mindful of how various global issues - not only security-related issues such as nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear safety, terrorism, and cybersecurity but also climate change, development, and human rights challenges – have a direct and material bearing on people's lives.

As a country that over the years has overcome many difficulties by working with the international community, Korea stands ready to actively contribute to improving global governance.

By hosting the Second Nuclear Security Summit in 2012, the Third International Conference on Cyberspace in 2013, and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 2014, Korea has been a partner in shoring up global governance in a range of areas.

Moreover, Korea was the first emerging economy to host the G20 Summit in 2010, where it contributed to enhancing global financial governance by playing a bridging role between developed and developing countries.

As a country that suffered from the ravages of war and destitution and that continues to experience the pain of a divided nation, Korea is reaching out across the world and sharing in the pain and sorrow of those suffering from disasters and conflicts.

In 2011, Korea became the first Asian country to host the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) and shared with many countries our transition experience from aid recipient to aid donor.



Korea will continue to play a constructive role in addressing a range of global challenges such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), setting the post-2015 development goals, and establishing the post-2020 new climate regime.

In addition, Korea will actively promote a model for global poverty eradication and sustainable development by sharing our Saemaul Undong, which contributed to eliminating rural poverty in Korea.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that building a framework of trust and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia will be crucial for a more peaceful and secure future for our world.

A mere few decades ago, East Asia was considered peripheral. Today, it is increasingly becoming the center of gravity of the world.

This is clearly seen in the fact that the three East Asian countries - Korea, China, and Japan - account for a quarter of global output and more than 20% of world trade.

East Asia's tremendous potential can be instrumental in addressing world-wide problems such as unemployment, the gap between rich and poor, large-scale natural disasters caused by climate change, terrorism, and cybersecurity.

However, political mistrust and differences in East Asia are worsening despite deeper economic interdependence and the growing need for cooperation in the region.

This is hindering East Asia's ability to reach greater heights and the international community's quest to meet global challenges.

One cannot fail to mention North Korea's unmitigated pursuit of nuclear weapons and its defiance of international trends as the greatest impediment to multilateral cooperation in the region.

North Korea's nuclear program development is indeed the single-greatest destabilizing factor not just for the Korean Peninsula but also Northeast Asia. It also constitutes a serious threat to global peace.

North Korea has been in simultaneous pursuit of the utterly incompatible goals of building-up its nuclear weapons capabilities on the one hand and developing its economy on the other. If anything, this is exacerbating the human rights and humanitarian situation in North Korea.

After the 3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to condemn North Korea for human rights violations on November 18, North Korea responded vehemently, again threatening the international community with the specter of "nuclear war."

Added to this are issues stemming from history as well as ongoing territorial and maritime disputes and tensions among East Asian nations.

The extremely fraught state of East Asia today is often likened to that of Europe at the end of the 19th century. Some say the region is witnessing a "return of geopolitics."



I firmly believe that the key to opening a true "Asian Century" lies in transforming the dynamics of mistrust and conflict into one of trust and cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the heart of East Asia's problems lurks a trust deficit. Restoring trust is therefore the first order of business if we are to unravel the complex problems that East Asia faces today.

It is with this in mind that the Korean government is pushing forward with its Trustpolitik, which aims to build trust along three broad dimensions.

The first is building trust on the Korea Peninsula.

The path to resolving East Asia's varied problems should begin with addressing the seven-decade-long division of the Korean Peninsula, an archaic remnant of the Cold War era.

When I took office last year, I put forth the "Trust-building Process on the Korean Peninsula" to usher in an "era of happiness on the Korean Peninsula".

This process aims to develop inter-Korean relations based on trust and pave the way for co-prosperity by leaving open the door to dialogue with the North, even as we maintain credible deterrence to safeguard peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

I proposed to the North that the two Koreas should first open small corridors that could help support the lives of ordinary people, the environment and cultural exchanges. Furthermore, the Presidential Committee for Unification Preparation was launched to lay the groundwork for substantial cooperation between South and North Korea.

It is when the people of South and North Korea continue to take small but meaningful steps that include interactions with civil society groups, that the two Koreas will be able to become one community again.

Only when the people of the Korean Peninsula communicate, cooperate, and think of each other as partners that live under the same roof, rather than as existential threats, will peaceful unification be possible.

What is key is North Korea's attitude.

If Pyongyang abandons its nuclear program and starts improving the livelihood of its people, Korea, along with the international community, will support its economic development and the shadow of the Cold War will be cast off.

The second is restoring trust in Northeast Asia.

The Korean government's "Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative" aims at a new order of peace and reconciliation in the region by transforming the dynamics of mistrust and conflict into the dynamics of trust and a cooperation.



If countries in the region start building up habits of cooperation from concrete and practical areas such as nuclear safety, climate action, and energy security, it will be possible to build a multilateral cooperation process not unlike the one in Europe.

In order to achieve multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia, it is important that Korea, China, and Japan, each with unique roles and statuses, step up and join hands.

The Korean government will work to host a trilateral Korea-China-Japan Foreign Ministers` Meeting in the near future and build on that meeting to hold a trilateral summit.

Korea will also work together with key stakeholders, such as the United States and Russia, to advance an architecture of peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia. I hope North Korea, too, joins this architecture.

The third is expanding the infrastructure of trust in Eurasia through the "Eurasia Initiative".

Through communication and cooperation with major partner countries, the Korean government aims to promote closer Eurasian connectivity so that it can truly become a single continent.

To this end, the Korean government will give concrete shape to the "Eurasia Initiative" through trilateral cooperation projects among South and North Korea and Russia, and among South and North Korea and China.

In addition, we will extend our transportation and energy networks beyond Northeast Asia to the reaches of Eurasia. This will not only create a new growth engine for the 21st century global economy but also, in the mid-to-long term, build trust in the political and security domains.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the Trust-building Process on the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative, and Eurasia Initiative move forward successfully and in sync with one another, a corridor of trust and peace will open on the Korean Peninsula, which, as a bridge between ocean and land, will eventually unleash a new engine of growth for the international community.

Peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula will hasten a new era of peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia and also contribute greatly to strengthening global governance for peace and security in Eurasia and beyond.

Unification of the Korean Peninsula, I would stress again, will be a "bonanza" not just for Korea but also for Northeast Asia and indeed humanity.

I hope that all of you here and indeed the international community will lend valuable support and join us in the quest to bring these initiatives for peace and security to fruition.

May today`s conference also present visions and constructive pathways for a peaceful and prosperous Northeast Asia, a peaceful world, and new global governance.

Thank you.