

Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity 2017 Congratulatory Message

by H.E. Jae-in MOON
President of the Republic of Korea

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I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the holding of the 12th Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity and extend a warm welcome to all participants. My special thanks go to the guests who have come to Jeju Island from over 80 countries around the world.

Distinguished Guests,

First, I would like to bring your attention to the beautiful nature of Jeju Island. Jeju is a 'world-renowned environmental treasure-island' which has been awarded the UNESCO's prestigious triple crown - a World Natural Heritage site, a Biosphere Reserve and a Global Geopark. Although your stay may be brief, I hope all of you can fully enjoy this wonderful island.

But what makes this island truly beautiful is its people. Since far back in history, people have referred to Jeju Island as an island known for three things you will not find here - no thieves, no beggars and no front gates. No matter how tough life was, people on this island never coveted what belongs to others nor begged. Instead, they trusted and depended on each other. This is a beautiful community that is quite rare in our world and an example of a 'community of peaceful coexistence' which humanity should aspire toward. I hope that you may also fully experience the charm of the lovely people of Jeju island.

Distinguished Guests,

69 years ago, this peaceful and beautiful island suffered a terrible tragedy. Tens of thousands of innocent residents who did not even know what ideology meant were sacrificed in the its name. This

was an ordeal suffered on the front lines of the Cold War that ravaged the world.

However, Korea and Jeju island have now moved beyond the suffering of the past and are opening the way toward peace and reconciliation. In 2006, the Korean President himself acknowledged the responsibility of the state and made an official apology on behalf of the nation. My new administration will continue to carry out its remaining responsibility in finding the truth and restoring the honor of the victims and their families.

I am especially delighted that a session on the April 3rd Incident is to be held for the first time in this Forum. With the 70th anniversary of the April 3rd Incident next year, I hope the session will be an opportunity to heal the remaining pain and scars of the people of Jeju.

Now Jeju Island is healing the remaining vestiges of confrontation and conflict, and opening a new age of peace and coexistence. This is the spirit of the Jeju Forum - 'seeking peace and common prosperity of Northeast Asia'.

Distinguished Guests,

The new government of the Republic of Korea will fulfill its responsibility and play its part in pursuing 'the peace and common prosperity of Northeast Asia'. We will launch an entirely renewed initiative and boldly implement it for lasting peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula. To this end, we will work with the international community. In cooperation with relevant countries including the United States and China, we will bring North Korea out to dialogue through persuasion and pressure and achieve the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue as well as improvements in inter-Korean relations and US-North Korea relations. We will take the lead in dealing with Korean Peninsula issues without relying on the role of foreign countries.

The recent series of missile launches by North Korea is a serious challenge not only for the Korean Peninsula but indeed for international peace and stability. I will respond resolutely to such provocations together with the international community. Also, in the case North Korea commits an armed provocation, I clearly pledge to preserve the peace by promptly and forcefully retaliating with the defense capabilities of both the Republic of Korea and the steadfast Korea-U.S. alliance.

Distinguished Guests,

On a Korean Peninsula made free from the threat of war, I will ensure that the economy flourishes. An economic community encompassing South and North Korea will bring about the 'Miracle on the Korean Peninsula' which will change the global economic map by expanding South Korea's 'Miracle on the Han River' into North Korea's 'Miracle on the Taedong River'. This will also play the role of establishing a lasting peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia.

I also take great interest in the session on the human rights situation in North Korea which is scheduled for the second day of the Forum. As a human rights lawyer, I have long championed the human rights of the South Korean people. And as human rights are universal values of mankind, I will endeavour to enhance the human rights of the North Korean people without hesitation. In cooperation with the international community, I will urge the North Korean authorities to introduce changes to its policies and institutions.

Distinguished Guests,

A peaceful Korean Peninsula is no longer just a dream. Within my term in office, I will create a drastic turning point for peace on the peninsula. I will lead the Republic of Korea to spearhead efforts for peace and common prosperity in Asia. It is my hope that all of you will join me in this grand dream.

I would like to once again express my deep appreciation to the officials of the Jeju Provincial Government and the citizens of Jeju Island who have made this forum possible with your hard work and dedication. Thank you.

* This is the congratulatory remark (full-text) of H.E. Jae-in MOON, President of the Republic of Korea, in the 12th Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity.

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