

## ① **Opening Remarks**

by H.E. Chung Eui-yong

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### **2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial**

December 7, 2021

Distinguished Foreign and Defense Ministers,  
Under-Secretary Generals of the United Nations,  
Mr. Lacroix(라크루아), Mr. Khare(카레), and Ms. Pollard(폴라드)  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to welcome you all  
to the 2021 U.N. Peacekeeping Ministerial in Seoul.

It was with regret that we had to change the meeting  
to a virtual format at the very last minute  
due to the spread of the new variant of coronavirus.

I thank all participants and organizers for their hard work  
in ensuring that this meeting could still take place as scheduled.

My special appreciation goes to the Co-chairs –  
Bangladesh, Canada, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands,  
Pakistan, Rwanda, Uruguay, the United Kingdom  
and the United States – and, particularly, the U.N. Secretariat  
who helped pave the way for this Ministerial,  
the first time since 2019.

Distinguished Representatives,

Allow me to take a brief detour in history.

As you all know,

Korea was one of the first flashpoints of the Cold War.

It was here that the United Nations was first tested in its commitment to collective security.

The international community rose to the challenge and, under the first international unified command flying the blue flag of the U.N., helped repel the aggression and restore the peace.

When the open hostilities ended in 1953

with the signing of the Armistice,

the U.N. Command was tasked with ensuring that

another military conflict does not erupt on the Korean Peninsula.

The 68 years that passed without outright conflict,

and the miraculous rise of the Republic of Korea

from the ashes of war, is a true testament to the value of the U.N.,

and a reminder of what its peacekeeping mandate

can achieve for other conflict areas around the world.

Being such a beneficiary of the U.N.'s assistance,

the Republic of Korea is proud to be a staunch supporter

of U.N. peacekeeping activities.

We are already the 10th largest financial contributor and, as host of this Ministerial, have been involved in many initiatives including the launch of our own peace process on the Korean Peninsula.

I hope our strong message for peace in Korea will resonate with others where conflict is still ongoing and give them hope that a peaceful and prosperous future is within reach.

Building upon the results of the 2014 and 2015 PKO Summits and the last three Ministerials in London, Vancouver, and New York, the Peacekeeping Ministerial in Seoul will provide us with a timely opportunity to update ourselves on the current conflict situation and renew our collective will to foster peace by making the PKO stronger.

This is also the first Ministerial since the U.N. Secretary-General announced 'Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)' last March.

So today will be a meaningful chance to discuss how to translate our commitments into action in the key priority areas enlisted in the A4P+.

Distinguished Delegates,

As technology advances and becomes more affordable to the parties of conflict and non-state actors, the operating environment in which U.N. peacekeeping missions are deployed is increasingly complex and high-risk, constantly shifting.

It is essential to leverage the necessary technological tools and medical support as well as provide proper training in order to prepare our peacekeepers to meet the growing challenges, better deliver on their mandates, and protect themselves.

Against this background, the Republic of Korea is launching the “Seoul Initiative on Technology and Medical Capacity-Building in Peacekeeping” today, to declare our commitment and suggest priority areas for improvement.

These areas include supporting and piloting a Smart Camp model in PKO missions and providing expertise and training in medical capacity. We will be announcing them as part of our pledges later today.

Korea is ready to work with the U.N.  
and interested Member States  
to continue the discussion  
and to develop and initiate a partnership project  
on promoting technology and medical capacity in peacekeeping  
after the Ministerial.

Distinguished Representatives,

We are learning that one of the keys to ensuring sustainable peace  
is by making the peacekeeping and peace-building operations  
more inclusive, particularly by promoting the participation of women.

In this regard, I hope that this Ministerial  
will also glean more light on how  
a more equitable gender representation can contribute  
to peacekeeping as well as conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Although the demand for U.N.'s peace operations is growing,  
the resources and capacity of the peacekeeping missions  
are still far behind to meet those demands.

I invite the participating delegates  
to make strong, concrete, and practical pledges  
to create PKO that is stronger and fit for the future.

The Republic of Korea will stand by the Member States as we upgrade the PKO, strengthening the international peace and security and the protection of vulnerable populations around the world.

Distinguished Guests,

Many of you are familiar with the adage “Freedom is not free”. I would venture to add that “Peace is not free”. It requires an unwavering commitment and willingness to act.

In Korea, this holds true as any other.

An armistice can halt the hostilities, but it does not end the war nor establish peace.

This is why my government is hoping to bring an end to this unnatural state of an ongoing 68 year Armistice and replace it with a more permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

I believe that the Korean people deserve no less.

Let us all not lose sight of the goal of achieving lasting peace in all the conflict areas that we operate.

This starts with ensuring that our PKO organizations are well-equipped to perform their roles and ends with aligning their processes and goals toward achieving sustainable peace.

Through shared solidarity and commitment,  
I hope this Ministerial can offer a light of hope  
for peace in the daily lives of those  
who suffer in conflict situations.

Thank you. /End/