

Remarks from MND 7 December

Hello. I am Suh Wook, Republic of Korea Minister of National Defense.

I extend my sincere welcome to representatives of governments and international organizations to the virtual 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial.

I express my gratitude for your understanding and rallying together in one spirit despite the sudden adjustments to the conference procedures and schedules for all nations caused by COVID-19.

I am deeply regretful that the conference means and procedures had to be adjusted as we had prepared various events to develop defense cooperation and PKO development.

However, seeing such an extensive attendance by representatives of member states and IOs, I can sense first-hand your will and aspirations for international peacekeeping.

National and IO representatives,

UN peacekeepers have passed on peace to conflict areas and hope to those suffering over the past 70 years.

Yet, security landscape of the international community is still complex and unpredictable. Conflicts continue in various corners of the world even right now.

Even as traditional threats persist, new threats, including pandemics, disasters, climate change and cyber, are expanding.

In particular, even at this moment, COVID-19 is threatening the safety of UN peacekeepers.

Today, Peacekeepers have to effectively execute complex missions in increasingly unstable environments.

Recently, UN Secretary General Guterres announced the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) in order to resolve this situation.

Furthermore, to respond more actively to the changing security environment, the UN has put forth the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping, pursuing peacekeeping methods based on cutting-edge technology.

In this context, I believe it is profoundly meaningful we are having an opportunity for national and IO representatives to discuss the development direction of the UN PKO.

Technical and medical capacity building, a main topic of this conference, will greatly assist in raising the efficiency and substantially developing PKO in a changing security environment.

Above all else, I look forward to the preparation of safe and improved mission conditions of the peacekeepers via constructive and active discussions.

Distinguished guests,

The Republic of Korea has grown from a country receiving assistance from the international community to one leading world peace and giving assistance.

Since entering the UN in 1991, Korea has deployed 19,000 peacekeepers over the past 30 years.

Currently, our service members are active in four missions, including Lebanon and South Sudan, and has become one of the ten major financial contributors to the UN PKO.

Through this conference, the Republic of Korea seeks to strengthen its UN PKO contributions to a new level.

First, by utilizing ICT, a strength of Korea, and proposing a Smart Camp model, we look to provide a blueprint of the future UN Camp that is safer, more efficient and more eco-friendly.

Furthermore, we will also reinforce medical training and medical capacity building for peacekeepers in areas experiencing continuous casualties.

We will also proactively support female and police peacekeepers in their capacity building and participation expansion as these areas have seen their importance grow recently.

Per the emergency requirement request of the UN, we will also contribute helicopters that we currently possess.

I believe the contribution of helicopters will become a model example of Triangular Partnership Program of the UN, through partnership with countries that will operate the helicopters.

Distinguished guests,

As many of you know so well, Korea, the only divided country in the world, is endeavoring towards the complete denuclearization of, and establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Our Government will do its utmost so that the Korean Peninsula Peace Process, under consistent pursuit, will lead to fruitful results.

I request your unchanging support and interest of the Republic of Korea's efforts towards peace of the Korean Peninsula and the world, just as you had done so in the past.

I hope the Ministerial becomes a meaningful occasion to generate substantial contribution means for UN Peacekeeping Operations, and further solidify the cooperation and solidarity among the member states. Thank you.