

Congratulatory Message



Congratulatory Remarks for the World Journalists Conference 2020

Greetings. Let me begin by extending my congratulations on convening the World Journalists Conference 2020, held online this year due to COVID-19.

Despite its relatively short history of 8 years, the World Journalists Conference has been hailed as a shining example of public diplomacy.

I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work of President Dong Hoon Kim and members of the Korea Journalist Association, who managed to put together this meaningful event in these difficult times.

This year's World Journalists Conference looks to the future of journalism through three subjects: fake news, COVID-19, and the 70th anniversary of the Korean War.

As you may well know, the world has been besieged by an epidemic unprecedented in our lifetime and subsequent economic recession. Meanwhile, we are grappling with "fake news" that spreads like wildfire.

I am well aware that in order to avoid inhibiting freedom of expression, regulations that address fake news need to be tailored with a high level of precision. This perspective has driven the Korean government's response to COVID-19 fake news. To the extent that such misinformation poses a serious social problem threatening the health and safety of citizens, the government is making the utmost effort in preventive measures to avert an "infodemic." According to a paper published in a prominent U.S. journal, misinformation about COVID-19 has led to approximately 800 deaths and 5,800 hospitalizations.

That "fake news" poses such a real threat to human lives should sound an alarm.

I believe this demonstrates how vital trustworthy information is. In this regard, allow me to extend my respect to all the journalists around the world joining in this worthwhile occasion.

Distinguished guests from the media and press around the world:

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War.

The two Koreas joined hands two decades ago for the June 15th South-North Joint

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Declaration, and again, two years ago, for the April 27th Panmunjom Declaration, but we have seen no further progress recently.

Nevertheless, our belief remains firm that permanent peace on the Korean peninsula is a noble goal and mission that South and North Korea must achieve.

In fact, the COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the reality that the two Koreas constitute not only a shared community of fates but a shared community of life in terms of public health.

I ask for your continued support of our resolute journey towards a 'Korean peninsula of life and peace.'

We now live in an era where digital technology enables everyone to produce news. However, the flood of information paradoxically throws into sharp relief the value of journalism.

I hope this year's event will serve as a venue of wisdom to reaffirm the importance of journalism and promote solidarity in preparation for the post-COVID-19 era.

Thank you.

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Prime Minister **Chung Sye-Kyun**