

WELCOME ADDRESS

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Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you to this Regional Forum on Reinventing Government in Asia organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in partnership with the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the United Nations Development Programme, and the newly established United Nations Governance Centre in Seoul.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Guido Bertucci, Director of UNDESA and Mr. Kim Ho-young, Director of the UN Governance Centre for making this event possible.

Distinguished delegates, we are living in an age where countries around the world are redefining the role of their governments.

In line with this trend, the Korean government embraced government innovation as its greatest priority in public administration and has made tremendous strides in this area especially over the past three years. The main focus of our efforts has been in identifying and pursuing innovative advancements in the five target areas of efficiency, high quality of service, transparency, decentralization, and participation, all of which correspond to the session themes of this Forum.

In order to ensure the sustainability of such government innovation efforts, the current administration first outlined a vision and formulated roadmaps for innovation,

selected specific tasks, and laid down the infrastructure for innovation. Now, the Korean government has shifted its focus, concentrating on the implementation and expansion of further innovation initiatives.

Moreover, the Korean government co-hosted the 6th Global Forum on Reinventing Government with the UN last year to foster the sharing of innovation experiences among the global community.

As many of you may know, the topics covered during the 6th Global Forum in Seoul highlighted numerous positive experiences within the region at both the national and sub-national levels. The 6th Global Forum closed with the adoption of the 『Seoul Declaration on Participatory and Transparent Governance』, which set concrete policy actions at the regional, national, and local levels. Also, the main follow-up activity of the Forum was a project entitled "The UN Governance Centre," which celebrates its official opening this evening.

Now, let me illustrate a few examples of the successful administrative innovations in which Korea takes pride. The Korean government developed the Government Innovation Index (GII) in 2005 to measure the level of innovation in government organizations, for which it earned the 2006 United Nations Public Service Award.

Korea's IT infrastructure has also been a driving factor of innovation within the Korean government, as seen in the Home Tax Service. The Home Tax Service developed by the National Tax Service is a comprehensive on-line tax administration service that allows taxpayers to resolve any tax related issue over the Internet.

The Korean Government has been exerting such efforts towards innovation under the strong belief that transparency and efficiency are absolute prerequisites for effective public service delivery, which, in turn, is based on public trust. Fair and reliable public services inspire public trust, which further creates a favorable environment for businesses. Therefore, it can be said that public trust is a cornerstone of good governance, and that good governance essentially depends on public trust.

As you know, a series of preparatory Regional Forums takes place in the year prior to the Global Forum. The Regional Forum in Asia this year is being held under the

theme of "Building Trust in Government." This theme was selected as part of an ongoing effort to highlight innovations and best practices of governments that can lead to enhancement of public trust within the Asian region. The focus of this Regional Forum, therefore, is on the exchange and transfer of experiences that have been successful in building trust in government. Countries will present various measures that have increased the level of trust in governments, through which they have succeeded in improving governance and enhancing the lives of the people.

I believe that this conference will provide excellent opportunities for countries to assess their own ongoing reform efforts and practices by analyzing best practices and innovative approaches taken by other countries. I am confident that the next three days will be filled with valuable discussions and exchanges regarding different methods of building trust in government for the purpose of improving governance.

Once again, I would like to thank all of you for the commitment you have shown through your participation in the Forum. Your valuable insights will no doubt be a great contribution to the furthering of innovation in governments around the world. I wish you the best of luck in all of the proceeding discussions.

Thank you.