XXXIX GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REMARKS FROM
THE HEAD OF DELEGATION OF
THE PERMANENT OBSERVER COUNTRY OF

KOREA

JUNE 1, 2009
Statement addressed by the head of the delegation of the Republic of Korea, Counselor Kim Man-Seok at the Dialogue on Cooperation between the heads of delegation, the OAS Secretary General and the Heads of Delegation of the Permanent Observer Countries,
June 1st, 2009, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

Dr. Jose Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the OAS, Ms. Patricia Isabel Rodas Baca, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Honduras, Representatives, Observers, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Korean government, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Honduras for its hospitality and the excellent preparation for this year’s General Assembly. I would particularly like to thank Secretary General Insulza and his staff for arranging this dialogue.

This year marks the 28th anniversary of Korea’s accession to the OAS as a Permanent Observer. Since becoming the first Asian country to join the OAS in 1981, Korea has worked very closely with the OAS to improve its relationship with all OAS member countries. Especially after the MOU on basic cooperation between Korea and the OAS was signed on December 1999, Korea has been actively involved in supporting various OAS missions, from democracy building to Electoral Observation Missions in Latin America and Caribbean States.

In full support of OAS’s four main pillars, namely, democracy, human rights and justice, peace and security, and development and prosperity, Korea has made contribution;

- by supporting Electoral Observer Mission activities to promote democracy in Honduras, Venezuela, Peru, Panama, Ecuador, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Paraguay, through not only providing financial assistance to these important missions, but also dispatching officials to play appropriate roles,
- By contributing a total of U$160,000 to the OAS’s Peace Fund and approximately U$100,000 to the Central American Meeting of Inter-American Forum on political parties up to now with the aim of promoting democracy, peace and security in the region,

- by supporting over U$100,000 worth of good to various missions of the OAS, through KOICA (Korean International Cooperation Agency) including five SUV’s and 20 computers to Peace Initiative in Colombia and a hundred computers to the Inter American Children’s Institute distributed in Panama and Nicaragua. Also, KOICA has sponsored over 30 students to come and participate in an “E-Trade and Export Promotion Program” in Korea.

Now, I would like to make a few remarks on the future of the relationship between Korea and the OAS.

Although Korea is at a great geographical distance from most OAS member states, I believe that we are narrowing this distance through enhancing cooperation with the OAS. And I hope that in the future the cooperative relationship will advance to an even higher level than before.

Within this context, this year, the Korean government decided to contribute U$120,000 to the OAS’s priority projects, a 20% increase from the amount contributed in 2008. With particular interest in this year’s main theme of “Towards a Culture of Non-Violence”, a part of Korea’s contribution will go towards the OAS Peace Fund as well as other projects such as the Promotion of Democratic Values among Youth (Model OAS General Assembly) and Electoral Observation Missions.

In addition, bearing in mind Korea's more active involvement in this region, we are committed to developing new cooperative projects with the OAS and thus further expanding our areas of cooperation. One good example would be a new initiative Korea takes this year to nurture experts on Latin American affairs. The Korean government is pursuing this new project with enthusiasm in order to increase substantial cooperation with the OAS. I firmly believe that in order to make the program a success, the full
support and cooperation of the OAS will be essential. Korea will also continue to participate in a diverse range of activities of the OAS in 2010, making our utmost efforts to secure a financial support for those activities.

Lastly, I would like to briefly mention the World Expo 2012 which will be held in the city of Yeousu, Korea from May 12 to August 12, 2012 under the theme “The Living Ocean and Coast”. I’m certain that this Expo will be a valuable opportunity for the world to search for solutions to the various challenges, especially relevant to OAS member countries such as climate change, sea level rise, environmental pollution and resource depletion in the ocean. In this context, I reiterate my high expectations for the active participation of the OAS member countries to this international event.

In closing my remarks, I hope the 30th General Assembly will yield meaningful and productive results and I would hereby like to express my appreciation for the full support of the government of the Republic of Honduras as well as the leadership of Dr. Jose Miguel Insulza, the Secretary General of the OAS in successfully preparing this year’s meeting.

Thank you.