

Prime Minister's Statement

Distinguished delegates from UN ESCAP member and associate member states,

Honorable representatives from civil society organizations,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Congratulations on the opening of the UN ESCAP High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

I am delighted to welcome you to the international city of Incheon.

Since Korea first established the legislation for persons with disabilities in 1981, we have made great strides to uphold the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the past 30 years.

While we still have a long way to go, the Five-year Policy Development Plan for Persons with Disabilities has improved the quality of welfare services, increased mobility, as well as information and access to special education and employment opportunities.

It was in the same token that, in 2008, Korea ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Under this framework, we hope to work in close cooperation with the international community to further enhance the lives of people who are physically challenged.

In recent days, disability-inclusive development has emerged as an

important agenda along with the MDGs.

All of us gathered here should take pride in the fact that this region pioneered the initiative to promote the rights of persons with disabilities twenty years ago.

Distinguished guests!

In order to protect and ensure the inherent dignity and fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities, we need to engage every level of society from governments to businesses to persons with disabilities themselves.

In particular, international civic groups have a decisive role to play in promoting cross border exchanges.

I hope this gathering will serve as an opportunity to build stronger cooperative relations to shape a better future for persons with disabilities in the New Decade.

Before I end, let me express my deep appreciation to the ESCAP Secretariat, and representatives from governments and civil society for the strong commitment you have shown to improve lives of persons with disabilities.

I ask you to share your valuable wisdom, experience and advice to realize the vision as set out in the UN Convention.

I wish you all the very best and every success!

Thank you.

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