

# **Keynote Speech for Session I**

at the Meeting of the Environment Policy  
Committee (EPOC) at Ministerial Level

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by

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Thank you, Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank the secretariat for providing us with such excellent reports including the Environmental Outlook to 2030.

The OECD Environmental Outlook presents us with two different messages. The first one is a warning that the environmental risks threatening our global eco-system are increasing. The other is that there are policy alternatives to ensure a sustainable future, and that the costs for doing so are affordable.

Our task is to make this vision a reality through shared determination and concerted action. I would like to emphasize in particular that we will need to make efforts to achieve environment-economy-equity integration as the OECD has recommended.

It should be said that there has been some progress in improving the economic efficiency of environmental policies. However, there is much to be done in integrating environmental concerns in other policy areas such as energy, transportation, and industrial policy. There are also gaps between countries when it comes to the implementation of environmental policies.

I think this is largely due to concerns that adopting ambitious environmental policies may result in diminished competitiveness and intensify the inequalities between countries.

In this regard, the OECD outlook offers guidance by making the case for the integration of environmental goals with economic and industrial policies, demonstrating that the cost for ambitious environmental policies would not be expensive.

In addition, the Outlook is significant in that it reaffirms the necessity of considering the different impact of active measures across regions and countries by presenting the cost estimates by region.

If systematic analyses of the benefits of environmental policies are provided in tandem with the analysis of the costs involved, the case for ambitious environmental policies would certainly become more solid. This is something that the OECD could keep in mind for future work, and Korea would continue to participate actively in such endeavours.

With regard to specific policy alternatives, Korea has been implementing various policy tools to cope with major environmental problems that the OECD has identified.

For example, for the preservation of biological diversity, the Ministry of Environment introduced the strategic environmental impact assessment system in 2006. The Ministry is encouraging local residents to participate in eco-system conservation efforts, for instance, by compensating them for un-harvested crops left to feed migratory birds. In addition to expanding protected areas, the Ministry plans to evaluate the effectiveness of managing protected areas in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

With respect to water, the Ministry has established a river basin management system which includes the designation of riparian buffer zones and a total pollutant load management system. Moreover, in an attempt to manage the demand for water, the Ministry is gradually increasing the price of water.

In order to address the health impacts of pollution, in 2006 Korea implemented a 10-Year Plan for Environmental Health, and this March legislated the Environmental Health Act. The government also continues to perform risk assessments for vulnerable areas and populations.

I believe that in order to respond effectively to the environmental pressures caused by globalization and ensure that the effects of globalization are more positive than negative, the establishment of good environmental governance is crucial.

More specifically, it will be necessary to build a cooperative framework between advanced countries and newly emerging economies so as to facilitate the formulation of environment-friendly policies and institutions in newly emerging economies with the technological and financial support of advanced countries.

I sincerely hope that this meeting will lead to fruitful discussions on policy alternatives and frameworks that member and non-member countries together can agree upon. I am thankful for this opportunity to renew our shared resolve to address the environmental challenges that we are all facing. Thank you.