

Opening speech to be delivered
on the occasion of OECD High-Level Forum on Migration
(Parallel session C)

Developing skills: Language skills development and integration of immigrants' children into the school system

Greetings

Good morning.

My name is Woo-ho Kim, and I am Director General of Nationality & Integration Policy at the Korea Immigration Service.

I appreciate OECD's careful preparations for this meaningful forum on migration.

I am pleased to be here representing the Korean government and to have this opportunity to discuss how to promote language skills development and successful integration of immigrants' children into the school system.

Immigration trends in Korea

Let me start by briefly introducing the immigration trends in Korea.

Ever since the Korean government was founded in 1948, the number of foreign residents in Korea has increased to 1 million by 2007 over the 60 years.

This was followed by another 600,000 increase in just 6 years, bringing the total number of foreigners now residing in Korea to 1.7 million.

In the meantime, Korea has swiftly gone from a **sending** country to a **receiving** country of migrants.

Basic Plan for Immigration Policy

With a sharp increase in the immigration inflow since 2000, it has become ever more essential to design and implement **effective** immigration policy for immigrant admission, support for settlement, and social integration.

In this regard, the Korean government enacted *Framework Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Korea* in 2007. Under this Act, the government develops basic plan for immigration policy for every 5-year period. The 5-year plan is carried out through

annual action plans with the cooperation of related ministries.

The 2nd Basic Plan for Immigration Policy is currently underway for the period from 2013 to 2018. The ongoing plan aims to deliver **5 policy goals** — **openness, social integration, human rights, public safety, and international cooperation.**

Language skills development and integration of immigrants' children into the school system

The basic plan also includes measures to promote language skills development as well as how to assist immigrants' children in the integration into the school system.

With respect to language skills development, the government has been running Korea Immigration and Integration Program since 2009.

The program consists of **two** parts: **Korean language course** from level 0 to level 4 and the advanced course in level 5 for **understanding the Korean society.**

The social integration program is not mandatory, but those who have gone through the program will be given an **advantage** when applying for change of status, permanent residence, or naturalization.

This year, around 22,000 people have been **voluntarily** participating in the program.

The government plans to operate the program on **two separate tracks** based on the immigrants' needs: **One** for those who wish to acquire **permanent residence** and **the other** for those who want to apply for **naturalization.** This would allow the immigrants to learn Korean language and understand the Korean society in a more **efficient** manner.

At the same time, the government is implementing various measures to ensure that immigrants' children are integrated into the school system.

As part of this effort, we are offering **preparatory** programs to the children before they enter regular schools in Korea. They are designed to help children with immigration background to better adapt to Korean schools. Under the programs, they learn basic Korean and Korean culture in tailored small sized-classes. We are currently working on **expanding** those programs.

The government is also offering job training and counselling service for immigrants' children.

In particular, the government is running an "early adaptation program" provided in 13 different languages. The program is intended to help foreign-born children of immigrants easily adapt to the Korean society.

In addition, immigration offices provide guidance and advice for the foreign-born children on school enrollment and inter-school transfer as well as school life.

Based on close cooperation, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice are sharing information on foreign-born children's stay in Korea and their presence in the school system. By doing so, we are working to ensure that immigrants' children **all** have access to school education.

We will continue to provide necessary support such as Korean language training for immigrants and their children to ensure that they unleash their full potential and successfully settle down in Korea.

I am confident this Forum will serve as a meaningful venue for us to share relevant information and experiences under the theme of "Mobilizing Migrants' Skills for Economic Success."

I would like to once again express my **gratitude** to the OECD for inviting the Korean delegation.

If you have any questions or comments, please let me know **after the session** so I can give feedback **personally**.

Thank you.