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Welcoming Address

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President

Korea Energy Economics Institute

Good morning. Distinguished participants

This morning, I have a great privilege to greet you, and welcome you all to this workshop under a theme of '*Towards multilateral energy cooperation in Northeast Asia*'. As being already informed, the Korea Energy Economics Institute (or simply KEEI) organizes two energy expert workshops back-to-back in next two days. That is, today's workshop will be followed by another important workshop with the theme of '*Cooperative Measures in Northeast Asian Petroleum Sector: Focusing on Asian Premium Issues*' to be held tomorrow.

The topics, which we will address in next two days, highlight the energy issues which face Northeast Asia now and will do in future. Needless to say, regional energy cooperation among the neighboring countries is important, particularly in term of securing reliable and efficient supply of energy sources now and in the long term. As you are well aware of, Northeast Asia is one of the most energy hungry regions in the world. China, Japan, Chinese Taipei and Korea are big energy importer in the world, and the DPR Korea has been severely suffering from energy shortage over the last decade. Although they have significant reserves of energy sources in East Siberia region, Russia and Mongolia still have serious constraints in developing their energy sources, which in turn appears to be a bottle-neck for their economic and social development. The issue of energy security in Northeast Asia is no longer regional concern but becomes more and more global concern.

We, Asian countries, pay more in purchasing crude oil from the Middle East than the countries in the Western hemisphere. This is not simply due to a geographical distance or geopolitical reason. I would say, this reflects a weak position of Asian countries in global energy security arena. Unless we

are enhancing the regional capability for stable, reliable and economic energy supply, we may have to continue to pay more and more for energy imports even in the future.

As an energy economist in an energy hungry region of Northeast Asia, I would like to endeavor to find the most efficient and effective way for the region to be equipped with robust capability of enhancing energy security. One of the most feasible options to which I give a higher value is the promotion of mutual energy cooperation among the countries in Northeast Asia for the development of indigenous energy sources and related projects in pursuing the longer term stability of energy supply.

Today, I have a sincere wish that these two energy expert workshops on today and tomorrow will be a great stepping stone in architecting a roadmap for initiating regional energy cooperation in Northeast Asia. The Korean Energy Economics Institute will continue to play an active role as a messenger in preaching and thus achieving the desire of promoting mutual energy cooperation in Northeast Asia.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for your participation in the workshops and your valuable contributions. And I also would like to thank the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy of our government for their continuous supports.

I wish your stay in Seoul enjoyable with a good memory and all the best. Thank you very much.