

## **KEEI & IEA Joint Conference**

**- Northeast Asia Energy Security and Regional Cooperation**

**(Grand Ballroom, Jw Marriott Hotel)**

## **Congratulatory Address**

**March 16, 2004**

Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy

Chil-Doo Kim

Honorable Dr. Bae Soon-Hoon, Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Business Hub, Dr. Lee Sang-Gon, President of Korea Energy Economics Institute, Mr. William Ramsay, Deputy Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, Dr. Ria Kemper, Secretary General of the Energy Charter Treaty, Distinguished Speakers, and ladies and gentlemen !

It is my great pleasure to address today's Joint Conference on Northeast Asia Energy Security and Regional Cooperation, an event jointly organized by the KEEI and the IEA. I am honored to be here today as we celebrate the March 12th establishment of "the Center for Energy Research, Northeast Asia". Let me take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to everyone involved with the Center. I am confident that the Center will support energy cooperation among Northeast Asian countries, and accomplish its aim when talented professionals converge under one roof to work out future strategies for energy cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Now, the world is experiencing the rapid trends of "globalization", so that corporate activities, information and human resources are flowing more freely beyond their borders. Meanwhile, "regionalization" is actively promoted among countries in Europe, North America, ASEAN and so on. I believe there is great potential for such cooperation in our region, too. In Northeast Asia, there are big energy-consuming countries such as Korea, China and Japan. On the other hand, Russia has vast resources-rich regions, such as East Siberia, Sakhalin, and Central Asia.

From this, we can see endless possibilities within the mutually complementary structures. It is true that we could not promote substantive cooperation for many years due to differences in political and economic systems. Fortunately, we are now recognizing the importance of establishing cooperative ties among our regional neighbors. Let us make good use of this opportunity! Spurred by the economic growth of Korea and China and the economic recovery of Japan, energy demand in these three countries is expected to increase about 1.6 times by 2020. I strongly believe, if we wish to secure a sustainable energy future in Northeast Asian region, energy resources within the region must be developed to meet a considerable portion of energy demands. To realize the sustainable energy future, it is crucial that we obtain

energy security through regional cooperation rather than competition among countries. I expect we will have in-depth discussions on this topic today.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Korean government trusts that energy security problems in Northeast Asia could be substantially resolved, if nations in this region promote the joint development and inter-connection of abundant energy resources such as oil and gas. To this end, setting up a "Northeast Asia Energy Community" among nations within this region is urgently required. It is my understanding that through many international symposiums and seminars, a wide consensus has been built among energy experts on the need for cementing Northeast Asia energy cooperation. Fully aware of this significance, the Korean government has decided to support such activities through the inter-governmental consultative mechanism. And, in this context, the government has been promoting the organization of "the Senior Officials' Committee for Energy Cooperation in Northeast Asia" consisting of officials from the UN/ESCAP and relevant governments.

During the conference, I hope we will have constructive discussions on establishing a framework for energy cooperation in Northeast Asia. The Korean government believes that we should exclude political elements from our discussions, and instead, concentrate solely on energy security and the economic aspects, when reviewing Northeast Asian energy cooperation. To this end, it would be desirable for relevant governments to fully negotiate with each other and then strengthen cooperation gradually. It is most fortunate that such a positive atmosphere has been created to promote energy cooperation in Northeast Asia. I am sure you will agree with me when I say that energy cooperation in Northeast Asia will be a win-win strategy beneficial to all nations in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is my firm belief that this joint conference will provide a good opportunity to facilitate exchanges and cooperation among relevant government officials and experts. I am hopeful that this gathering will further disseminate our consensus on energy cooperation in Northeast Asia. Ultimately, such results may have a positive impact on the policy decisions of each nation. In closing, I would like to express my warm appreciation to IEA and KEEI for organizing this event, and wish all of you the best.

Thank you.