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Leaders' Joint Statement in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations Between the Republic of Korea and C...

May 17, 2023
Seoul, Republic of Korea

We, President Yoon Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, met today in Seoul. We reaffirmed the strength and depth of the friendship between our two countries as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of ROK-Canada diplomatic relations.

Rooted in strong people-to-people ties dating back to the late 19th century, our friendship was reinforced on the battlefield during the Korean War. Over the last six decades, our relations have grown closer, from the opening of embassies in our respective countries to the signing of the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) and the Science, Technology, and Innovation (ST&I) Cooperation Agreement. Every day, our ties grow stronger through our shared commitment to promoting and protecting democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and multilateralism, and thanks to the people who contribute to shaping our respective communities in the ROK and Canada, reflecting the multifaceted richness of our relationship.

Through our respective Indo-Pacific Strategies, the ROK and Canada share a common vision for a more secure, free, prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region, offering numerous synergies and areas for future cooperation. Both our countries are engaged and active globally, and we are eager to advance together our shared values and priorities in multilateral and regional fora, including at the UN, G20, and the OECD; as partners collaborating through and with NATO and the G7; and with ASEAN, whose centrality we have reaffirmed in our respective Indo-Pacific strategies.

The ROK and Canada are not only friends and partners but also neighbors in the strategic region of the North Pacific – a key region identified in our respective Indo-Pacific Strategies. Stability, security, and sustainability in the North Pacific have become increasingly consequential for the future of our people. For this reason, we are committed to advancing shared interests in the region, together with our like-minded partners, and addressing common challenges collectively in a more effective way. To that end, we agreed to explore further cooperation among North Pacific countries based on common values and our shared economic security and prosperity.

President Yoon's successful visit to Ottawa last September – the first bilateral visit of his presidency – was a new milestone for ROK-Canada relations, as we agreed to upgrade our bilateral relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, based on five shared priorities in the areas of values, security, prosperity, sustainability, and beyond.

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Last September, we affirmed that the ROK and Canada are “Stronger Together”. Today’s meeting was an opportunity to review the significant progress achieved in implementing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and discuss advancing our partnership and deepening our relationship even further to ensure a brighter, more secure, and more sustainable future for the people of our countries.

Stronger Together for a More Peaceful, Democratic, and Just World

We agreed to continue working together to promote and defend the rules-based international system, democracy, freedom, human rights, and gender equality. To that end, our two countries will cooperate closely at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral level, including at the United Nations and through joint action within various initiatives and organizations such as the Freedom Online Coalition, the Media Freedom Coalition, and the Community of Democracies.

Canada welcomes ROK’s recent announcement of its intention to host a third Summit for Democracy. Both countries look forward to continuing the significant momentum that has been built through this initiative and working towards democratic renewal.

We discussed the impact of emerging technologies on preserving democratic values and institutions and the threats posed by disinformation and information warfare. We agreed to work closely together to develop, along with other like-minded countries, policies that are grounded in inclusion, human rights, and the rule of law, in order to defend against and to increase citizen and societal resilience to disinformation online. We reiterated our commitment to working together with like-minded partners, including through forums like the Global Partnership on AI, to advance our shared vision for the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence. We also agreed to cooperate in strengthening multilateral governance frameworks for the usage and applications of artificial intelligence and quantum technologies.

Prime Minister Trudeau reiterated Canada’s support for the goals of ROK’s Audacious Initiative to achieve a denuclearized, peaceful, unified and prosperous Korean Peninsula. This support includes the augmentation of Canada’s naval presence and participation in multinational operations in the region, such as joint efforts to monitor UN Security Council sanctions imposed against North Korea.

Canada remains committed to working closely with the ROK and the international community to address the DPRK’s actions that violate UN Security Council resolutions and destabilize the North Pacific region. We condemned the DPRK’s ballistic missile and nuclear programs and called on the DPRK to return to denuclearization talks as the sustainable way forward for long-lasting peace, security, and prosperity.

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The ROK and Canada are also deeply concerned about the severe violations of human rights in North Korea and the regime's complete disregard for the well-being of its people. We remain committed to strengthening cooperation to protect and promote human rights in North Korea, seek accountability, and improve the living conditions of the North Korean people. To that effect, we announced today that Canada and the ROK will work together to advance human rights in North Korea.

Prime Minister Trudeau welcomed President Yoon's important and meaningful steps toward improving ROK-Japan relations and extended support for expanding future-oriented ROK-Japan cooperation, which will contribute to peace and stability in the region.

We condemned in the strongest possible terms Russia's illegal and unjustifiable full-scale invasion of Ukraine and will continue working closely together, in coordination with the international community, to respond to Russia's severe violations of international law and human rights. Russia's brutal actions represent a fundamental threat to global peace and security on which our countries' longer-term stability and prosperity depend.

We reiterated our unwavering support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The ROK and Canada remain steadfast in our commitment to protect and defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will continue to provide Ukraine with the political, security, economic and humanitarian assistance it requires, and we will coordinate with our like-minded partners' longer-term plans to ensure Ukraine's independence, security and stability.

We reaffirmed our strong support for international rules and norms, including freedom of navigation and overflight as well as the purposes and principles of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and reiterated our opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo.

Defending peace and freedom in the region and globally requires that the ROK and Canada strengthen collaboration in defence and security. To that end, the ROK Ministry of National Defence and the Canadian Department of National Defence have decided to increase their collaboration and enhance bilateral defence cooperation. We also recently signed Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Materiel and Research & Development Cooperation. These arrangements will serve as mechanisms to facilitate overarching dialogue and cooperation on defence materiel and R&D matters, including the exchange of technical information, loans of materiel, joint test and evaluation activities, and harmonizing defence and national security requirements between the ROK and Canada.

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As part of our expanded partnership in defence and security, we also welcomed the recent announcement by our Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the launch of negotiations for an Information Security Agreement on industrial security and defence, which will contribute to deepening our bilateral security cooperation and increase information sharing and defence collaboration.

In addition, the ROK and Canada will explore opportunities to work more closely together on maritime security and countering illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Canada will deepen its cooperation in this area with the ROK in the North Pacific region.

We have also discussed our mutual commitment to peacekeeping and Women, Peace and Security, and have committed to explore concrete action to promote and advance a meaningful participation of women in defence & security, peace operations and peace negotiations.

We will also strengthen our cooperation in addressing non-traditional security threats that increasingly destabilize our societies, including climate change, health and food security, cyber and emerging disruptive technologies.

Stronger Together for Sustainable Growth and Prosperity for Everyone

The ROK and Canada recognize that achieving our shared priorities of protecting our democratic values and the rule of law, strengthening peace and security, addressing climate change, and creating jobs and prosperity for everyone also require us to enhance our cooperation and coordination on issues related to economic security, Science Technology and innovation (ST&I), climate resiliency, and environmental stewardship.

We share the conviction that prosperity is dependent on a rules-based multilateral trading system and we will continue working together in various multilateral fora, including the WTO, in particular through the Ottawa Group.

We will strengthen our trade and economic relations in the Indo-Pacific region, and work together to advance shared priorities and economic interests with other Indo-Pacific partners. In this vein, President Yoon welcomes and supports Canada's participation in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) upon consensus among its members.

Together, the ROK and Canada will reinforce a more open, predictable, sustainable and inclusive regional economic order. We welcomed the outcomes of the inaugural High-Level Economic Security Dialogue between our respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Industry. The ROK and Canada will continue to work closely together to coordinate economic security priorities, including on establishing predictable

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investment environments, on advanced and emerging technologies, on attracting new business and investment to the region, bringing Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) into global value chains, and creating sustainable jobs. We express opposition to economic coercion and remain committed to upholding a rules-based global economic system.

To further improve our mutual understanding and capacity to respond to the threats, challenges, and opportunities to our economic stability, trade, and investment flows, we are announcing the launch of an Economic Policy Dialogue between senior officials in our respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

We also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Critical Mineral Supply Chains, the Clean Energy Transition and Energy Security. This MOU will further cooperation toward strengthening and securing supply chains for clean energy and critical minerals between the ROK and Canada. This will support the development of clean technologies that will power green and sustainable economic growth and position the ROK and Canada as globally competitive players in areas including batteries and zero-emission vehicles.

Building on the success of the CKFTA, our governments will work together to further increase bilateral trade ties and work to address obstacles to the flow of goods and services between our countries, which will ensure the creation of jobs, particularly in the middle-class in both economies. The ROK and Canada share many economic challenges and we can leverage our respective expertise to meet them, particularly through cooperation and commercial exchanges in sectors including Information Communications Technology/Artificial Intelligence (ICT/AI) and Life Sciences. The ROK and Canada further commit to dialogue aimed at enhancing cooperation in agricultural research, given our shared interests in sustainable agriculture and food systems.

The triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are the most devastating and impactful global challenges to our peace and security, economic prosperity and social cohesion. We are resolved to take bold action to address these crises, mitigate their impacts, and support responsible environmental stewardship for the generations to come. We believe that economic growth and environmental protection can go hand in hand. Our joint efforts will result in more resilient economies and people, and foster innovation in clean and green solutions to the climate crisis.

The ROK and Canada have both committed to halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 through the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well revising National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans by COP16

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in 2024. Together, we can advance global implementation of this ambitious framework by focusing our collective efforts on halting and reversing biodiversity loss and putting nature on a path to recovery by 2050.

Prime Minister Trudeau welcomed President Yoon's agreement to join the Global Carbon Pricing Challenge (GCPC). This leader-driven initiative, launched by Prime Minister Trudeau at COP26 in 2021, sets a concrete target for carbon pricing coverage to drive action and greater ambition, offering a forum to bring leaders together, spotlight ongoing initiatives, support emerging pricing systems, and track collective progress. The ROK is the first country in Asia to join the GCPC, and ROK's participation will demonstrate leadership on regional cooperation on climate change and energy security.

Prime Minister Trudeau also welcomed the participation of several ROK's local governments in the Powering Past Coal Alliance and its cooperation with Canada on Small Modular Reactor (SMR) and other clean technology solutions like Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS). The ROK and Canada will continue sharing information and best practices to support the transition from coal power generation to cleaner energy.

Committed to clean oceans without plastic, we will continue working together to address plastic pollution.

Stronger Together Through People-to-People Connections

We emphasized the deeply rooted people-to-people ties that form the foundation of our robust bilateral relations. We believe that the strength of our democratic institutions, the cohesiveness and resilience of our societies, and the spirit of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship at the core of our prosperity depend on our ability to invest in and empower all our people while championing gender equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The ROK and Canada remain committed to creating conditions that enable everyone, including women and girls, minorities, and young people, to contribute meaningfully to the development of peaceful and prosperous societies, both domestically and globally. We agree to continue working closely together and sharing best practices on strengthening the social and economic fabric of our societies.

Today, we proudly announced the new youth mobility arrangement, with an annual quota of 12,000 people, which builds upon the memorandum of understanding from 1995. This arrangement provides increased work and travel opportunities for Korean

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and Canadian youth to further people-to-people exchanges and experience each other's countries. It will mark a true milestone for the deepening of the bonds of mutual understanding between the future generations.

We also look forward to 2024-2025 as the ROK-Canada Year of Cultural Exchanges. This initiative will enable Canadians and Koreans to celebrate the achievements of our artists, creators, innovators, and intellectuals while fostering stronger ties through dialogue and collaboration. It will also be an opportunity to actively encourage cultural partnerships and undertake projects in various fields including culture, arts, sports and creative industries.

Through our respective Indo-Pacific Strategies, we have also committed to invest more in supporting the people in the region and in providing development assistance to help our regional partners, especially in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, to build resilience, address climate change and support sustainable growth.

Stronger Together for a Brighter Future

Our meeting today reaffirms the deep bonds uniting the ROK and Canada, our shared values and interests, and our commitment to continually strengthen and expand our multifaceted Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, including in the Indo-Pacific and North Pacific regions.

We have tasked our Ministers of Foreign Affairs to collaborate with their respective Cabinet colleagues in leading the development and implementation of an Action Plan outlining concrete efforts and initiatives under each of the five shared priorities of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Expressing his gratitude for President Yoon's invitation and hospitality, Prime Minister Trudeau concluded by saying that he looks forward to President Yoon's attendance at the G7 Summit in Hiroshima and the NATO Summit in Vilnius. His presence at both meetings would exemplify ROK's Global Pivotal State vision and offers an opportunity to further discuss cooperation on several issues addressed today.

Embracing a Forward-Looking Vision for a Stronger Partnership

As we conclude this historic visit, the ROK and Canada are poised to embrace a forward-looking vision that will shape the future of our bilateral relationship. We have achieved important progress, strengthening our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership through concrete initiatives and agreements, the launch of the High-Level Economic Security Dialogue, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Critical Mineral Supply Chains, the Clean Energy Transition, and Energy Security, and the renewal of the Youth Mobility Arrangement (Working Holiday Program).

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Building on these accomplishments, our nations stand united in a shared commitment to strengthening democracy, promoting peace and security, and championing sustainable growth and prosperity for all. The ROK and Canada will continue working together to empower our people, advance innovation, and embrace human rights and gender equality. As we embark on the next 60 years of our bilateral relations, we are united in our determination to deliver concrete progress under our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, address regional and global challenges, and create lasting opportunities for the people of our nations.