

AUSTRALIA AND KOREA: NEW DIMENSIONS TO A GROWING RELATIONSHIP

Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, at the launch of the Australia-Korea Foundation, Sydney, 25 June 1992

It gives me great pleasure to launch the Australia-Korea Foundation here in Sydney tonight. I am delighted that through the satellite link-up Vice Foreign Minister Roe Chang Hee, Chairman of the Korea Foundation, Mr Llew Hyuck In and directors of the Korean counterpart body, the Korea-Australia Foundation, can also be involved directly in the launch.

The conception of the Foundations dates back to the exchange of visits between President Roh Tae Woo in November 1988 and the former Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Bob Hawke, in January 1989. They agreed that an Australia-Korea Forum comprising a group of leading thinkers from both sides be established to recommend practical ways in which to strengthen bilateral ties. One of the main recommendations of the Australia-Korea Forum was that both countries establish foundations to broaden and diversify the bilateral relationship. The early establishment of foundations in both countries is a measure of the support and commitment of both governments to further developing the relationship.

From Australia's point of view the relationship which is now evolving with Korea is among the most important of all our bilateral relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, and one in which Australia is investing considerable effort. Korea is already Australia's third largest export market and sixth largest trading partner. Australian exports to Korea are currently worth \$3.7 billion, predominantly raw materials, but could be significantly larger as well as more diverse in the future.

Current steel industry expansion, doubling power generation capacity, big increases in liquefied natural gas demand, massive infrastructure projects and significant rises in per capita incomes will increase the demand for energy, raw materials, agricultural commodities and processed foods.

The demand for education, tourism and financial services in Korea will also increase as per capita incomes rise. At the same time Korea is undertaking a massive science and technology program to develop its own strengths in this area. We understand the Korean Government alone, is spending in excess of \$30 billion in promoting its own indigenous technology and a large part of that program will be collaboration with foreign firms, research institutes and other related bodies.

In the non-traditional areas of our trade opportunities also abound, including in the area of tourism which is growing rapidly. We note that 1993 has been designated 'Visit Korea Year' and we hope that many Australians - who are great travellers - will visit Korea. Two non-stop flights by Qantas and Korean Air are now in place, with negotiations for an additional two flights by the end of this year. This trend will greatly assist the development of people to people links which are after all, the most basic and in many ways the most important building block of bilateral relations.

Australia's well-developed English speaking education system and western business practices offer particular opportunities for Korea. This is apparent in the increasing number of Korean students undertaking courses in Australia - some 2500 Korean students are expected to undertake courses in Australia in 1992, with growing interest in tertiary courses in business studies, computing, marketing, engineering and the sciences.

In the field of science and technology, Australia is undertaking world-class, leading-edge research in many areas of significant interest to Korea, and is looking for partners in research and development activities and their commercialisation - particularly in areas such as environmental technology, biotechnology, communication and information technologies. There have been several exchanges between Australia and Korea in the last two years to explore scope for collaboration in research, development and commercialisation. An Australian proposal for the implementation of the Korea-Australia Science and Industry Program (KASIP), a recommendation of the Australia-Korea Forum, is currently under consideration by the Korean Government. Our aim is to increase the awareness among Koreans of what kind of country Australia is, and what it has to offer in a wide range of areas.

I am particularly pleased that, in order to maximise the effectiveness of our two-way communication, Korea has established a Korea-Australia Foundation chaired by Mr Kum Jin Ho, former Minister for Trade and Industry and recently elected to the National Assembly. I am confident that Mr Kum's presence as chairman will ensure that the Foundation will have a high profile and great influence.

The Australian Government's decision to establish the Australia-Korea Foundation was announced in the 1991 budget, with a secretariat established in my Department at the beginning of this year. It has taken us a little time to do the preparatory work and get the right blend of experience and effectiveness in the selection of our inaugural Foundation membership but the chairman and members of the Foundation were formally appointed by the Governor-General on Tuesday of this week.

The Chairperson is Dr Brian Scott, a leading Australian businessman and consultant with extensive experience in international business development. Dr Scott has a substantial

association with Korea, and was the Australian co-chairman of the Australia-Korea Forum. Dr Scott also has a formidable knowledge of Australia's foreign trade and commercial relations having been chairman of the Trade Development Council since 1984.

The other 13 members of the Australia-Korea Foundation Board are:

- . Mr Adrian Buzo, Executive Director of the Melbourne-based National Korean Studies Centre
- . Mr John Coates, President of the Australian Olympic Committee
- . Mr Rodney Hall, Chairman of the Australia Council
- . Professor Stuart Harris, Professor of Resource Economics at the Australian National University and former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- . Ms Andrea Hull, Executive Director of the Department for the Arts of Western Australia
- . Mr Bill Mansfield, Assistant Secretary of the ACTU
- . Mr Roger Marshall, Director of MIM Holdings Pty Ltd and President of the Australia-Korea Business Council
- . Mr Ric Smith, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- . Dr Don Stammer, Director and Chief Economist of Bain and Company
- . Mr Anthony Steel, arts consultant
- . Mr Max Suich, Editor of the Independent Monthly
- . Professor David Trimm, Dean of the School of Chemical Engineering and Industrial Chemistry of the University of NSW
- . Mr Graham Wackett, Chief Executive of the Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation

As you can see, the membership of the Foundation's board reflects a wide range of

experience and skills. It includes people with specialist knowledge of Korea, and those with particular expertise in relation to various aspects of Australian society. We have chosen people who are prominent in academia, sport, the media, industrial relations and the tourism industry. I am pleased that people of such high calibre have so generously offered their services to the Foundation's board. Their participation bodes well for the Foundation's future success.

The Australia-Korea Foundation will have a staff of around 4 in Canberra and 2 in the Australian Embassy in Seoul once all positions have been filled. In the coming financial year 1992-1993, the Foundation is expected to have a budget of \$750,000, which includes salaries as well as program funds. This figure is expected to rise to \$1 million in 1993-1994. The level of funding allocated to the Foundation is indicative of the importance the Government attaches to the development of our relationship with Korea.

In addition to the funds it receives from the Australian Government, the Foundation will seek funds from the private sector to assist in the implementation of its various programs. While government may provide the spark for the development of exchange programs with other countries in the final analysis it is up to individuals and organisations from outside government circles to carry them out. The main task of the Foundation will be, therefore to provide seeding funds for programs which will, with the passage of time, become self-funding.

I will leave it to Dr Scott to provide you with a little about details of the Foundation's aims and initial activities. In summary, the aims of the Foundation are to broaden relations between the two countries in all areas, but with particular reference to commerce, science and technology, culture, sports and the news media; to promote institutional links, raise awareness of Australia in Korea, including through support for Australian studies; and to maintain liaison with the Korea-Australia Foundation and to cooperate, to the fullest extent possible, with its programs. In this context, I am pleased that during his recent visit to Australia, Mr Kum and Dr Scott were able to hold preliminary discussions on the roles of the Foundations. They agreed that while there were programs which the Foundations would want to implement themselves, there may be activities which the two bodies could carry on jointly, and I look forward to hearing about the development of such joint programs in the coming months.

An important aspect of awareness raising activities involves the correction of common misconceptions of Australia in Korea. In December 1991 the Australia Abroad Council commissioned a public opinion survey in Korea to determine the attitudes held by Koreans about Australia. The survey found that Koreans hold very positive attitudes towards Australia, and that they also see this country as one of great promise and potential.

The survey also found, however, that most Koreans focus upon Australia's natural

environment and its wildlife in their comments and concepts of Australia. In this respect they do not differ from many people overseas, who see Australia as a farm or a mine or a giant national park. As I said, what we as a country must do is let others know that Australia has much more to offer: that we are a highly sophisticated society, with advanced abilities in the areas of science and technology, and opportunities for cooperation in many areas.

It is therefore appropriate that one of the Foundation's first activities will be to assist a major Australian promotion which is being undertaken in Korea in November this year. "Promotion Australia 92: A New Partnership" is the first in a series of country specific promotions being staged by our Australia Abroad Council to promote Australia overseas. A major aim of the promotion is to change perceptions held by Koreans of Australia by presenting the potential of Australia in all its multi-faceted complexity.

I would like to conclude by wishing Dr Scott and his fellow board members well in their task ahead. As Australia looks towards its future in the Asia-Pacific region, the development of its relations with the Republic of Korea - one of the most dynamic and important countries in the region - will be of the greatest importance to us all. We have a relationship of growing substance, closeness and complexity, and the Foundation launched today will add a whole new dimension to it.

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