

Chapter 6

Expanding Support Base for Unification Policies

- I. Greater Citizen Participation
- II. Strengthening International Cooperation



Expanding Support Base for Unification Policies

Chapter 6

Expanding Support Base for Unification Policies

I. Greater Citizen Participation

1. Promoting Dialogue with the Public

Since its inauguration, the Roh Moo-hyun Administration initiated the “Open Forum for Unification” and the “Unification Minister-Policy Consumer Dialogue” in an effort to increase opportunities for the people to directly participate in policy making and to forge a national consensus on unification issues and policies toward North Korea.

The Open Forum for Unification (hereinafter “Forum”) is a two-way dialogue channel between the government and the public, in which the Unification Minister and senior officials from the Ministry brief the public on pending issues on government policies toward Pyongyang and inter-Korean relations, and take their opinions into consideration. The Forum was held 18 times in 2003 in Seoul and major provincial cities for leaders of various fields. In 2004, six Forums (with 970 participants) were held in the first six months, where groups with specialized functions such as representatives of women’s organizations, foreign dignitaries in Korea and specialists in unification education were invited. The Forum contributed to solidifying a base for national consensus by boosting people’s interest in and understanding of inter-Korean relations and unification issues and raising their participatory awareness.

In the second half of the year, the Unification Minister-Policy Consumer Dialogue was initiated to target direct and indirect consumers of government policies. Its objectives are to provide the opportunity for the Minister and senior officials from the Ministry to hear opinions about the actual situation as relayed by the consumers of policy, to incorporate their views into policy-making, and finally, to form policies that fulfill the demands of the people and raise their satisfaction.



Unification Minister-Policy Consumer Dialogue

The Unification Minister-Policy Consumer Dialogue was held three times in total, inviting representatives of tenant companies in the Gaeseong Industrial Complex and organizations interested in inter-Korean social and cultural exchanges. The Ministry also sponsored dialogues with policy consumers led by senior officials. Diverse suggestions and complaints

voiced by participants during the Forum and Minister-Policy Consumer Dialogue were positively reviewed and incorporated to improve policies and their implementation.

2. Creating a Monitoring Group and Conducting National Polls

Unification Policy Monitoring is a process by which the public can evaluate the Unification Ministry's policies on an on-going basis, and provide feedback on policy and, thus, seek improved policies. In 2004, a monitoring group, which consists of 100 members, was set up and three rounds of monitoring activities were conducted. The members include scholars, businessmen engaged in inter-Korean economic cooperation, and representatives of citizen groups related to supporting North Korea and unification-related activities. In 2005, there are plans to augment the monitoring group significantly and increase the scope and number of monitoring activities for the full-scale introduction of the public's evaluation-based monitoring. In addition, the government strives to monitor public opinion in order to pursue policies toward North Korea and unification that reflect public opinion.

The Ministry also conducts regular national polls. In 2004, three separate public opinion surveys were taken on major pending issues including the North Korean nuclear issue and the Gaeseong Industrial Complex project. The results were used as reference materials in formulating policies.

3. Gathering Public Opinion through Advisory Organizations

In an effort to generate a public consensus and inspire the public's awareness on the importance of achieving peaceful unification, the Ministry of Unification created the Unification Advisory Council, an advisory group to the President. Unification advisors are appointed by the President at the recommendation of the Unification Minister, and include respected leaders from various fields. The Roh Moo-hyun Administration's first Unification Advisory Council, a 30-member group chaired by Lee Hong-koo, was founded in July 2003. The group plays a crucial role in forming unification policies through policy advice to the President and individual opinion-gathering activities.

In 2004, through three rounds of regular meetings, the advisory group proposed policies, including an accurate analysis and evaluation of economic changes in the North, a comprehensive survey of the human rights issues in North Korea, publication of the White Paper on support and restoration work after the Yongcheon train disaster, assistance to

inter-Korean social and cultural exchanges, and support for the Gaeseong Industrial Complex development.

Meanwhile, in order to raise the efficiency and effectiveness of policy initiatives through objective and systematic analysis and evaluation of major policies, the Unification Policy Evaluation Committee has been established. The group consists of 15 experts in various fields, including politics, economics, law, and the press. In 2004, the group contributed to a more effective execution of policies toward North Korea through two rounds of regular evaluation meetings and offered advice on pending inter-Korean issues on an ad-hoc basis.

In addition, the Policy Advisory Committee is an organization which actively gathers and incorporates expert opinions when developing and implementing major policies on unification and North Korea. The Policy Advisory Committee for 2004 consists of 67 members in six subcommittees: unification policy, information on North Korea, exchanges and cooperation, sociocultural exchanges, unification education, and inter-Korean meetings. A total of 19 advisory meetings were held in 2004.

4. Support by Private Organizations

Until the 1980s, unification-focused organizations numbered only a handful, including the Association for National Unification of Korea. However, the number has soared since the 1990s and the scope of their activities is becoming increasingly specialized and diversified. Accordingly, the government and private organizations need to share information and promote cooperation in a growing number of areas.

A distinctive feature of the private-level unification activities in 2004 was the inter-Korean events led by private organizations in various fields. Some major examples include the Fourth Anniversary of the South-North Summit (June 14-17, Incheon) and the Inter-Korean Simultaneous Celebrations for National Foundation Day (October 3, Seoul and Pyongyang). Such inter-Korean events helped to foster the mood for inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, and the restoration of national homogeneity.

The government has been supporting various activities initiated by private-level unification organizations and, at the same time, proactively gathering suggestions and input from these organizations and incorporating them in unification policies. As of December 2004, non-profit unification organizations approved by the Ministry of Unification totaled 140, of which 27 were newly approved in 2004. In addition, the Ministry provided support, including approvals to use the Ministry of Unification as a sponsor, for various events organized by private-level unification organizations (23 cases), Minister of Unification Awards (6 cases) and Minister of Unification Commendations (3 cases), and arranged 15 visits to

Panmunjeom. In particular, the government contributed US\$401 billion to the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation for the August 15 Music Concert for Peace, the Unification Grand Rally for Youth, the Unification Forum and a seminar tour to provincial areas, which resulted in broadening the base for national consensus on unification.

II. Strengthening International Cooperation

1. Expanding the International Support Base

A. High-level Policy Consultative Meetings

In an effort to create an environment for the peaceful and early solution of the North Korean nuclear issue through the six-party talks and to secure international understanding and support for South Korea's policy toward Pyongyang, the government held high-level consultative meetings with major nations related to the Korean Peninsula.

South Korean Minister of Unification Chung Dong-young visited Washington, D.C. from August 31 to September 2, 2004 for discussions on major policy issues (including the North Korean nuclear issue) with high-level officials, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. During these meetings, Seoul and Washington confirmed the necessity to strengthen ROK-US cooperative relations for peace in Northeast Asia. In addition, Minister Chung gained American support on inter-Korean cooperation projects including the Gaeseong Industrial Complex, creating a positive international environment for pursuing policies toward North Korea.

Meetings and discussions were also held with leading figures who influence Washington's policies toward the Korean Peninsula. The talks promoted a better understanding of Korean Peninsula issues, and included an explanation of the status of inter-Korean relations, the North Korean political situation and the Policy of Peace and Prosperity. The meetings also increased the breadth and depth of American support for the direction of Seoul's policies toward Pyongyang. For example, during a conference of Korean Peninsula experts at the US Institute of Peace on September 1 and an interview with the Washington Post on the same day, Minister Chung stressed the importance of fostering the right environment for changes in North Korea and peacefully resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. He further explained the progress made in inter-Korean relations and changes taking place in North Korea.

As a part of the efforts to achieve a breakthrough in the North Korean nuclear issue, the government sent Minister Chung, who is also the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Security Council, as a presidential envoy to Beijing. During his visit to China from December 21-24, the Minister Chung paid a courtesy call on the chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Wu Bangguo, asking him to deliver a personal letter from President Roh Moo-hyun to the Chinese President Hu Jintao. They held discussions on ROK-PRC cooperation so as to further advance friendly bilateral relations and to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue.

In addition, the Minister held meetings with high-level Chinese officials such as the State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Li Zhaoxing, Minister of International Department of China's Communist Party Wang Jiarui, and Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo, in which they exchanged views on a wide range of issues. On December 22, Minister Chung delivered a special lecture on "The Era of Peaceful and Prosperous Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula" to an audience of some 400 professors and students at Beijing University.

South Korea and China shared the view that inter-Korean dialogue and the six-party talks need to be resumed as soon as possible in order to put an end to the North Korean nuclear crisis. The two sides agreed to make more active efforts to this end. Seoul boosted Beijing's understanding of the three principles for solving the North Korean nuclear issue. First, there will be no tolerance for the possession of nuclear weapons by North Korea. Second, the parties must find a peaceful solution. Third, Seoul must play an active role. They reached an agreement on the necessity of the early resumption of the six-party talks, a strategic decision by North Korea, and a flexible response by related countries.

Meanwhile, Unification Vice Minister Cho Kun-sik visited Germany from June 7-10, 2004 and held meetings with the State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Interior G. Wewer and the State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing I. Gliecke. During the



ROK-US High-level Policy Consultative Meeting

talks, the Vice Minister was briefed about Germany's post-unification efforts for social integration and reconstruction of the former East Germany, and then he explained Seoul's efforts to tackle the North Korean nuclear issue and promote inter-Korean cooperation through projects such as the Gaeseong project. The Vice Minister then visited the United Kingdom from June 10-12 to explain Seoul's policy toward Pyongyang and the status of inter-Korean relations through meetings

with key political leaders and participation in a debate organized by the Institute for International and Strategic Studies (IISS).

In addition, the Ministry of Unification invited Germany's Federal Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily to Seoul from December 9-11, for high-level policy discussions. The visit served as an opportunity for resuming the ROK-Germany high-level policy meetings, which had not occurred since German unification, and for creating an international environment to pursue practical policies toward North Korea.

B. Participation in Bilateral and Multilateral Meetings

The Ministry of Unification sent representatives to the second round of Six-party Talks (February 24-28), the third round of Six-party Talks (June 20-27) and the first round of working-level meetings (May 10-17) held in China. During the talks, the South Korean government strived to establish a practical negotiating mechanism for the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue by playing a leading role and preparing a specific negotiation plan while firmly maintaining the basic stance of: zero tolerance for the possession of nuclear weapons by North Korea, the peaceful solution of the North Korean nuclear issue and prevention of the recurrence of a security crisis through the promotion of peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia.

In addition, the Ministry also participated in bilateral and multilateral meetings related to the peaceful solution of the North Korean nuclear issue and peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia. Some of the meetings include: the ROK-US Senior Officials Meeting (January 17-19), the 15th Round of the Northeast Asia Cooperation for Dialogue in San Diego (April 4-6), the ROK-Russia Working-level Policy Consultative Meeting (June 14-16), and the ROK-US-Japan Trilateral Coordination Group (TCOG) on September 9-10. These meetings provided the opportunity to build cooperative systems for policy initiatives toward North Korea and to consult and coordinate policies.

2. Building an International Network

A. Briefings for Foreign Dignitaries Visiting Korea

The Ministry of Unification also took the initiative to explain to dignitaries visiting Seoul the status of inter-Korean relations and its stance on the North Korean nuclear issue in

requesting international cooperation and support for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Senior government officials who visited the Ministry of Unification in 2004 included Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson (March 10), Polish Foreign Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (August 23), U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell (October 26), and Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura (November 6).

A list of visitors from political parties, parliaments and leading international organizations and research institutes includes: the Vice Speaker of German Parliament Antje Vollmer (April 16), Senior Advisor to United Nations Secretary-General Maurice Strong (May 24), Deputy Head of International Liaison Department of China's Communist Party Ryu Hongchai (June 21), International Crisis Group President Gareth Evans (August 26), President of Heritage Foundation Edward Feulner (August 27), WTO Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli (September 24), IAEA Director-General Mohamed El Baradei (October 5), Chairman of Foreign Affairs of Japanese Parliament Yamamoto Ichita (October 7), Chairman of the South Korean-German Lawmakers Association Hartmut Koschyk (October 8), WFP Executive-Director James Morris (October 22), Deputy Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the State Duma Kosachev (November 3), U.N. General Assembly President Jean Ping (November 24) and Chairman of Defense and Security Committee of the Czech Parliament Jan Vidim (December 9).

In addition, shortly after the inter-Korean talks, the heads of diplomatic missions of the four major countries (the U.S., Japan, China and Russia) to Seoul were invited to be briefed on the outcome of the talks in order to further their understanding on the status of inter-Korean relations and their cooperation in the policies toward North Korea. The meetings were arranged with the ambassadors of EU nations to Seoul and key diplomatic officials to Seoul in order to explain the status of policy initiatives toward North Korea and Seoul's position on key issues, which resulted in broadening an international consensus.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to increase international support for the Policy of Peace and Prosperity and the international community's interest and understanding on unification issues through international exchanges and contacts in the legislative field, the Ministry supported an international workshop organized by lawmakers of the Unification, Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee of the National Assembly. A team of four lawmakers (You Sun-ho, Kim Won-wung, Kim Hak-won and Lee Sung-kwon) visited three countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Germany from August 9-17, 2004 for meetings with representatives of respective parliaments, leading figures in various fields, representatives of research institutes and experts to explain the policies toward North Korea and to urge the international community's support and cooperation in the peaceful solution of the issues related to the Korean Peninsula.

B. Overseas Resident Officers on Unification Affairs

Since dispatching a research officer on unification affairs to Germany on December 5, 1990, shortly after the Unification of Germany, the government has been sending resident officers of unification affairs to three countries—the U.S., Japan and China—since August 1996 in an attempt to enhance its competence in dealing with unification issues to an international level.

In 2004, renewing relations with the government, the parliament, and the Korean Peninsula-related think tanks of countries in which they reside, the resident officers boosted the understanding and support of their country-of-residence by explaining the status of inter-Korean relations and Seoul's policies toward Pyongyang. They also surveyed these countries' positions and viewpoints to reflect on formulating Seoul's policies toward North Korea. In addition, these officers provided support to inter-Korean government talks, private-level contacts and visits to the North arranged in their respective countries, and served as a local channel for inquiries on inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation projects.

3. Policy Promotion to the International Community

The unification of the Korean Peninsula is, in principle, an inter-Korean issue. However, it is also an international issue. In order to find a peaceful solution to the North Korean nuclear issue quickly and attain permanent peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, it is essential to strive for international understanding and cooperation on the government's unification policies. In 2004, the government supported international academic workshops organized by leading universities in the United States, Japan, and China to provide a basis for the promotion of an international goal toward a peaceful solution of the North Korean nuclear issue and the stabilization of peace on the Korean Peninsula. On October 21, at an international workshop organized by Keio University in Japan, the status of inter-Korean relations and the direction of policies toward North Korea were explained. At an international academic seminar organized by Columbia University on December 2, the recent political situation in North Korea and the direction of Seoul's policies on inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation were presented. Also, the basic features and implementation of the Policy of Peace and Prosperity were explained at an international academic meeting organized by Beijing University on December 18.

The Ministry of Unification took part in seminars and international academic conferences held overseas, including ROK-US Security Forum (March 9-12, Washington), East Asia Strategy Forum (March 19-21, Seattle), ROK-US Opinion Leaders' Seminar (July 16-17, Washington), Seminar on the North Korean Nuclear Issue and Northeast Asia Security

(October 22-23, Beijing), and ROK-China Unification Forum (December 20, Shanghai) to explain the government's policies toward North Korea, promote increased understanding in the international community and exchange views with other participants on pending issues relevant to the Korean Peninsula.

Activities targeting economic leaders visiting South Korea (including credit rating agencies such as Moody's, Fitch and S&P) and key officials of international organizations, such as KEDO, were also initiated, contributing to the enhanced understanding of the international community regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the government's policies toward North Korea.

In addition, the Minister, the Vice Minister and other senior officials of the Unification Ministry were interviewed by various representatives of the foreign press on 55 occasions, including the *Washington Post* and *Asahi Shimbun*, which served as opportunities to promote the government's policies toward Pyeongyang and the status of South-North relations.

The Ministry of Unification published a variety of materials to promote the Ministry's policies to the world. In August 2004, 1,000 English copies of *Policy for Peace and Prosperity*, which elaborated the government's policy, were published in CD-ROMs and small booklets. In December, an additional 1,000 English copies of *The Road to Peace and Prosperity* were published. Meanwhile, the Korean Unification Letter, which outlines the direction of policy initiatives toward North Korea and the government's position on major issues, was made available through e-mail, enabling quick and accurate communication of the recent progress in government policy initiatives and pending issues in inter-Korean relations.

In addition, *Unified Korea*, a monthly journal published by the Institute for Peace Affairs, a private think-tank, was distributed to overseas Korean communities, while *Korea and World Affairs*, a quarterly periodical, published by the Research Center for Peace and Unification, was distributed to overseas research institutions and experts on Korean Peninsula issues.