Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on

Early Childhood Care and Education

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Opening Remarks

Joon-Kyung KIM

President of KDI
Minister of Education, Mr. Nam-Soo Seo

Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO, Mr. Qian Tang

UNICEF Asia Representative of, Mr. Kunihiko Hirabayashi,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honor to welcome all of you to this conference. Foremost, I would like to thank UNESCO, UNICEF, ARNEC, and KICCE, for organizing this important event and for their strong support and commitment to advancing early childhood education and care. I would also like to thank all organizers for the hard work that went into putting together this marvelous platform where we will be sharing ideas and views on such a vital topic.

We are very much fortunate to have a group of leading scholars and practitioners gathered here today, to lend their diverse
expertise and insightful perspectives on early childhood education and care. So in the brief moment I have, I would like to focus on discussing the importance of policy design and implementation that delivers clear and tangible results in the context of economic development, based on the experiences of Korea and other countries.

We are acutely aware that investing in early childhood education and care policies will ensure long-term national growth competitiveness. Effective policies will nourish the next generation of citizens and workforce with advanced socioeconomic qualities, who will lead the nation toward the knowledge-based sustainable growth. These policies are also an effective early intervention tools that can enhance social cohesion by nurturing children from all social brackets with equal opportunities.

As a result, developed and developing alike, governments devour capital and resources to devise early childhood education and care
policies that will deliver. Indeed, there is a growing call for governments to deliver results when it comes to public policy, whether it be education, health or infrastructure. The critical question policymakers across borders are asking is, how do we implement policies to ensure desired outcomes in early childhood development? More simply put, how do we turn ideas into tangible results?

In policymaking circles, there is a growing recognition that implementation matters in ensuring that policies deliver results. Indeed, the trend has been moving towards result-based monitoring and evaluation as a way to achieve better outcomes. The principle of "Science of Delivery" dictates that policy implementation can be improved by setting specific, measurable and achievable goals and undertaking consistent monitoring and evaluation on key performance indicators, so the assessment can provide proper feedbacks that will in turn fortify the policy effectiveness. The virtuous cycle of Science of Delivery is an
indispensable in today's complex and advanced policymaking environment where national consensus is increasingly harder to draw and policy impetus harder to sustain.

The message that the principle of "Science of Delivery" can lead to successful policy implementation is clearly told by success cases in recent history of development. Mr. Tony Blair, former prime minister of the United Kingdom, has successfully raised policy effectiveness by adopting the principle of Science of Delivery. In 2003, 30% of national hospitals in England had over 4 hours of waiting time. In order to improve the national medical system, the former prime minister first set a clear target of raising the percentage of patience whose waiting time is under 4 hours to 90%, within 3 years. The policy was a success, due to the closely monitoring of each hospital's waiting time and provision of appropriate incentives; hospitals that achieved the 4 hours target received £50,000 of annual incentive, whereas under-performing hospitals' managers where replaced and received consultation to
improve efficiency.

Surprisingly, exercise of "Science of Delivery" can also be found several decades ago in the case of Korea. A set of rural development policies, widely known as Saemaul Undong, was a champion of "Science of Delivery" in 1970's. Saemaul Undong was highly effective in reducing rural poverty, because farmers were not only incentivized with direct financial incentives like rice subsidies but they were also rewarded based on the government's close monitoring of their performance. In 1973, the Korean government set a clear target of raising rural income 3.3 times within 8 years. Then, the government systematically monitored every village within the interactive performance-incentive framework. Where well-performing villages received financial incentives, under-performing villages where encouraged to perform better by learning from the good-performers, hence resulting in healthy competition, capacity building and overall growth.
In this significant gathering of renowned scholars and senior policymakers, I would like to underscore the importance of linking the financial allocation with the policy's effectiveness. As we discuss and share ideas on how to best achieve better results in early childhood development, I urge all the participants to think about how these policy ideas can be designed and implemented to deliver results. Once again, I would like to thank you all for joining us here today for this important event, and I look forward to fruitful and productive discussions.

Thank you.