

Joint Statement between the Republic of Korea and New Zealand

4 September 2024, Seoul

On the occasion of the official visit by the Right Honourable Prime Minister Christopher Luxon of New Zealand to the Republic of Korea from 4 to 5 September 2024, a summit meeting was held between His Excellency President Yoon Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea (hereinafter referred to as the "ROK") and the Right Honourable Prime Minister Christopher Luxon of New Zealand.

Recognising the ROK and New Zealand's long and warm partnership, shared values and aligned strategic vision for a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, both sides decided to advance discussions on elevating the current "Partnership for the 21st Century" agreed in 2006, to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" with the aim of adopting a relevant framework in 2025.

Both sides noted their common interests, including upholding democracy, the rule of law and human rights, support for strong multilateral and regional organisations and frameworks, and a commitment to peace and prosperity, free and open trade, and sustainable growth. Recognising the close ties stemming from more than sixty years of diplomatic relations, vibrant people to people exchanges, strong trade and economic links and long-standing defence and security connections, both sides decided to further strengthen cooperation and exchanges in the following areas:

Trade and Economic Cooperation

Both sides emphasised the importance of enhancing mutual prosperity and strengthening trade and economic connections, noting that in the last 10 years, two-way trade has approximately doubled between the two countries with scope for further opportunities to be explored in the future.

Reflecting the increasingly important nexus between economic prosperity and security, both sides are committed to working together on issues relating to economic security. Accordingly, both sides decided to launch a regular bilateral Economic Security Dialogue to discuss challenges and opportunities in this area.

Given the importance of multilateral rules and institutions in promoting free and open international trade, both sides shared a common interest to work for even closer alignment in multilateral institutions including the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). New Zealand committed to supporting the ROK's successful hosting of the APEC in 2025.

Both sides are committed to the effective implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA).

In light of the 10th anniversary of the ROK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement in 2025, both sides committed to continue cooperation under the Agreement to enhance two-way trade and investment. Both sides also agreed to explore the possibility of an upgrade of the Agreement, with a view to achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

Both sides noted with satisfaction that the ROK-New Zealand Double Taxation Agreement of 1981 has delivered tax benefits to Koreans and New Zealanders who live and work in each other's countries. Both sides are committed to continuing negotiations to update this long-standing agreement.

Science, Education and People to People Cooperation

Noting the continued collaboration through five rounds of the ROK-New Zealand Science and Technology Joint Committee Meeting, both sides noted the opportunity for

cooperation in high-tech fields in science and technology with officials shortly to discuss arrangements for the sixth Science and Technology Joint Committee Meeting. Both sides appreciated having held ten rounds of ICT Consultations among the ROK, New Zealand and Australia (KANZ) and will continue to explore opportunities for cooperation in this field.

Recognising the importance of the economic value of space, both sides are committed to fostering a private sector-led space industry.

Recognising the knowledge and experience that both countries have in responding to natural hazards, both sides agreed to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between their national emergency management agencies to share information and foster cooperation, including the possibility of negotiating a Memorandum of Cooperation.

Both sides acknowledged that education is an integral part of the bilateral relationship with a shared commitment to continue two-way student mobility between the ROK and New Zealand. Both sides decided to continue to promote student programmes with the aim to expand the number of grantees through various scholarship initiatives.

Both sides also noted that the ROK and New Zealand Working Holiday scheme provides an ongoing platform for the regular exchange of young people in both directions.

The New Zealand side announced that the Prime Minister's Fellowship with Korea would be restarted with a new Fellow to be announced for 2024-25.

Defence and Security Cooperation

Both sides acknowledged their long-standing defence and security relationship, stemming from the Korean War, when New Zealanders fought for the freedom of the Korean people.

Both sides commended their cooperation to further enhance peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, including their work together to monitor and report on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s evasion of UN sanctions, and New Zealand's contribution to the United Nations Command (UNC).

Both sides expressed satisfaction on having recently completed the bilateral military activity ROKKIWI in June 2024 as well as the Passage Exercise during HMNZS AOTEAROA's recent visit to Busan, Korea. Both sides noted that the Korean Armed Forces and the New Zealand Defence Force have an ongoing commitment to conducting bilateral military exercises.

Regional and International Cooperation

In recognition of shared interests and close strategic alignment, both sides are committed to reinvigorating high-level dialogues to exchange information and views on issues of international and regional importance, including through Foreign Ministry Consultations and Joint Economic Consultations.

Both sides welcomed mutual participation at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting that was held in Nuku'alofa on 26 to 30 August, which ROK participated in as a dialogue partner of the Forum. New Zealand also acknowledged ROK's recent hosting of the inaugural Korea-Pacific Islands Summit in May 2023. As members of the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP), both sides expressed willingness to continue their close cooperation to support the vision outlined in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)'s 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, including through their respective contributions towards the construction of a Pacific Community ocean research vessel.

Recognising their unique history of Antarctic cooperation, both sides are committed to protecting Antarctica as a place for peace, science and cooperation, through the Antarctic Treaty System.

Both sides recognised the need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. To this end, both sides decided to seek opportunities to explore areas for possible cooperation in their respective transitions to net zero emissions, including the use of carbon markets.

Both sides affirmed that they are also strong advocates for a multistakeholder approach to the safe, secure, trustworthy and responsible design, development, deployment, and use of Artificial intelligence (AI). New Zealand welcomed the ROK's leadership on strengthening global AI governance including the upcoming REAIM (Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain) Summit from 9 to 10 September, and the AI Seoul Summit held from 21 to 22 May 2024 where New Zealand was pleased to support the Seoul Ministerial Statement for advancing AI safety, innovation and inclusivity.

As natural partners in the Indo-Pacific region, both sides expressed support for freedom, peace, stability, openness, and prosperity of the region, and a rules-based order that protects the rights and sovereignty of states and upholds the principles of the United Nations Charter. Both sides reiterated their strong support for ASEAN centrality and full support for the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)".

Both sides also welcomed the opportunity to work together to progress the "Indo-Pacific 4 (IP4)" format including through regular high-level engagements, as a forum to exchange views on pressing regional issues.

Both sides condemned in the most serious of terms the DPRK's ongoing illegal ballistic missile and nuclear development programmes. Both sides called for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the DPRK, and urged the DPRK to take up offers of international dialogue. Both sides condemned in the strongest possible terms the increasing military cooperation between the DPRK and Russia, including the DPRK's export and Russia's procurement of ballistic missiles in violation of UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.

Both sides further expressed concern over what the DPRK may gain in exchange for its provision of weapons to Russia. Both sides committed to continue strengthening cooperation to promote human rights in the DPRK and called for the immediate resolution of the issues of abductees, detainees, and unrepatriated prisoners of war. New Zealand expressed support for the goals of the ROK's Audacious Initiative as well as the "August 15 Unification Doctrine" to achieve a unified Korean Peninsula that is denuclearised, free, peaceful, and prosperous.

Both sides strongly condemned Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and each pledged to continue to support the sovereignty of Ukraine and its efforts to secure a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace. Both sides stressed that they will continue to call on Russia to abide by its international obligations and immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw from the internationally recognised territory of Ukraine.

Both sides reaffirmed the right of freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful use of the seas accorded by international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Both sides reiterated that UNCLOS sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. Both sides expressed serious concerns over recent developments in the South China Sea. Both sides reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS. Both sides also stressed the importance of preserving peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Both sides expressed concern over the recent regional escalation of hostilities in the Middle East, which makes a ceasefire in Gaza even more urgent. Both sides shared the long-standing view that a negotiated political solution is the only way to achieve lasting peace and security, and that there is no military solution to this crisis. Both sides urged all parties to exercise maximum constraint and de-escalate tensions.

Both sides condemned ongoing Houthi attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea as illegal, unacceptable and profoundly destabilising. Both sides are committed to supporting maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Middle East. /End/