

Welcoming Remarks
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for

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“Effective Education and Innovative Learning”
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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen! It is indeed a great privilege for me to have the opportunity to greet you all at this highly important gathering of top global educators. I would like to thank President Nam Pyo Suh and Professor Chang Dong Yoo for inviting me.

Throughout the human history, education has been considered as the key to individual and societal progress. It is known that Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, went as far as to say, “The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living for the dead.” How could one possibly put the importance of education more succinctly?

But in this age of rapidly deepening knowledge economy, education is ever more important to individual well-being and inclusive societal progress since knowledge is the most critical factor of production and income and wealth generation.

At the same time, as compared to the Industrialization era, the knowledge gap caused by the education gap would further widen the productivity gap and so the income and wealth gap. For example, the productivity differential between those who can read manuals and those who cannot in the Industrialization era must have been substantial. But it is easy to imagine the differential would have been much less than the productivity differential between those who can use the internet, for example and those who cannot.

The accelerating globalization in this deep knowledge economic era would further intensify the wealth gap simply because as some columnist put, “jobs do not need passport but workers do in this globalized world.” Jobs would move across national borders in search of business-friendly environment. Indeed, keeping business-friendly atmosphere is critically important for workers with appropriate skills and knowledge.

Consequently, effective education and innovative teaching and learning, which is the main theme of this conference, should be the most critical national agenda for all. So, I view this gathering is valuable for all of us. It is my sincere hope that your discussion here today would provide a basis for appropriate educational reform for enhancing individual well-being and resolving social polarization, already becoming a serious socio-political issue in many

countries.

The educational reform, of course, should include continued training and retraining for workers and universal lifelong learning. It is needless to say in the world of rapid technological change, learning should be a permanent process and it has to be flexible enough to adapt to the rapidly changing technological frontier. Undoubtedly, in this regard, the cyber or online teaching and learning would become more and more important, to say the least. The university-acquired knowledge in today's world may quickly become obsolete. Consequently, as I previously mentioned, the mismatch between job and skills and knowledge would be worsened and result in further skewed income and wealth distribution.

With regard to training and retraining and lifelong learning, businesses, in addition to their own programs, may have to work closely with both government and universities. Public-private-universities' effective trilateral cooperative programs for lifelong learning must be an important part of any educational reform. I know this is one of the important subjects for this conference.

Since this educational reform in today's world is so essential, I for one have been advocating for some time now to put educational reform on top of the national priority list. In fact, it is my sincere hope that our next President would become, what I would call, an "Education President" who would put top priority on educational reform.

I do hope that the current presidential candidates and their staff pay closer attention to the outcome of this meeting for their national agenda setting.

Personally, I am much interested in reading the proceedings of this forum as soon as they are available. Obviously, I am very much looking forward to listening to Chancellor Gene Block of the UCLA, my alma mater, speaking on the subject of "Transformation of higher education in the 21st century."

With this very short remark, I wish you very successful meetings and an enjoyable stay in Korea.

Thank you.