

# Keynote Speech

by

Dr. Lee Jaehyun

Deputy Ministry of Environment

Republic of Korea

at

the 1st Global PAGE Conference

4 March 2014, Dubai, UAE

Your Excellency Dr. Rashid Ahmed Bin Fahad, Minister of Environment and water of the United Arab Emirates!

Your Excellency Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP!

Honorable ministers!

Distinguished delegates from countries and organizations!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am honored to speak in front of you today as the head of the delegation of the Republic of Korea.

Let me deliver my sincere congratulation to UNEP and the government of UAE on this historic first Global PAGE Conference.

Distinguished guests!

Let me start by reminding you two very important ideas recognized and shared by all of us here.

First, economic development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

Second, simultaneous pursuit of economic development and environmental protection is an effective and practical way to achieve many goals of sustainable development.

Based on these two ideas, PAGE was initiated as a vehicle to collect our wisdoms in converting green economy concept and the potential into real world progress.

At Rio+20 in June 2012, Korea announced its plans to expand green ODA by 2020 and to promote global green growth partnerships.

Korea reaffirmed the commitment to green economy by playing an active role in this PAGE program.

As one of the founding PAGE friends, it is such a pleasure to see that so many countries come together sharing common visions and ideas.

Today, we will talk about green economy policy and the implementation status, and will explore future direction of our PAGE.

I hope that we would share and exchange many insightful knowledge and valuable ideas to provide operational policy agenda that can help achieve concrete and measurable progress at the interface of the environment and the economy.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Since the 1992 Rio Declaration, Korea has taken various approaches to bring in sustainable development.

From 2013, we have been seeking innovative ways to realize environmental welfare and to contribute to the new national vision of Creative Economy with 70% employment rate.

We set the National Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goal and developed the Roadmap.

Next year, Korea starts emission trading and bonus-malus on vehicle carbon emissions.

The two systems would create new carbon finance market and promote carbon reduction technology.

Also, Korea aims at resource recycling society which would lead to technology development and new market creation.

For instance, we are planning to build “environment-friendly energy towns” to tackle energy and environmental challenges at the same time.

This is a creative new way to convert landfills and incineration plants, which are often resisted by local communities, to clean-technology based energy stations.

Korea's drive toward green economy is being fueled by these creative ideas, on the solid foundation of laws and institutions.

Distinguished guests,

As we are well aware, environmental technology can be one good answer in realizing green economy.

However, what if existing laws and institutions stand in the way of environmental technology development?

What if, for example, our regulation system depresses business activities by requiring too many and outdated environment-related permits or licenses?

Identifying this problem, Korea is now preparing more effective and efficient comprehensive license management system utilizing Best Available Techniques.

Like so, if we want to bring in green economy, we should first fix our institutions and regulations which were designed to serve brown economy.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Given the enormous scale of challenges and opportunities ahead of us, we still have long way to go.

Our concerted efforts need to be further expanded and intensified.

The whole world should work shoulder-to-shoulder toward the ultimate destination of green economy.

Only with the collective efforts, we can bring in decoupling of economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions, and usher in the third industrial revolution and job creation through green innovation.

The role of PAGE is supporting countries in paving the way that leads to these green economy goals.

And, Korea will do its part in order that PAGE can create valuable progress over its program period of 2013 to 2020.

There is a saying that goes, “one shall remember the builder of the well he drink from.”

We should move now to dig a well that all people on the earth can drink from.

Then, many years from now, people may remember us as the builders of the great well called green economy.

Let me close this speech by reminding you that it is always ourselves that push us forward, but it is also ourselves that hold us back.

Thank you.