

*Statement by H.E. Ambassador Choi Jong-moon
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
On the Occasion of the
Sixth Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation
for the Sustainable Development Goals
May 5, 2021*

Your Excellency Andrejs Pildegovics,

Your Excellency Mohammad Koba,

Co-Chairs of the Forum,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here at the STI Forum. This provides an excellent venue for a range of key actors to share their thoughts on how best to maintain the momentum for the implementation of the SDGs. And I am so glad to have this opportunity to present the Republic of Korea's efforts to harmonize human well-being, the environment and economic growth through the green transition.

The COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented in scale. Yet there are also opportunities in disguise. It can prove to be a time to dramatically rethink our ways of life. The COVID-19 situation has brought an ever greater call for non-face-to-face interaction. This in turn accelerates the transition to a digital economy. There is also a growing imperative for the shift to a low-carbon, green economy.

Indeed, it is as part of endeavors to overcome the COVID-19 situation and facilitate the transition to a resilient and sustainable economy that the Korean government announced the "Korean New Deal" last July.

By 2025, a total of 133 billion dollars will be invested in the Korean New Deal, which comprises the Digital New Deal and Green New Deal for digitalization and decarbonization, respectively.

In particular, the Digital New Deal seeks to accelerate the transition into a digital economy by investing further in the DNA or Data-Network-AI systems and non-face-to-face industries.

In tandem with the Digital New Deal, we shaped the “ODA Strategy for Science, Technology and ICT” in March with the aim of advancing the more effective achievement of the SDGs.

Although international cooperation on science, technology and innovation is specified in SDG 17, it goes beyond one single goal. Indeed, science, technology and innovation have a bearing on all 17 goals and are invaluable factors in the successful implementation of the SDGs. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis has deepened the global digital divide, emphasizing the need for even more thriving cooperation on science, technology and innovation in a wider range of fields.

The Korean government, with the ODA Strategy as a solid basis, is supporting the international community’s inclusive digital transformation through projects which reflect the particular needs of partner countries.

To put this in numbers, Korea devoted 280 million dollars in grant aid for science, technology and ICT in 2020, accounting for nearly 11% of Korea’s total ODA. Furthermore, we have established 58 Information Access Centers in 48 countries and provided ICT education to 140,000 people through 870 information education courses.

In closing, I wish to express my sincere hope that the “Korean New Deal” and “ODA Strategy for Science, Technology and ICT” can serve as a guiding light in “building back better and greener” in the post-COVID-19 era. Thank you for your kind attention. /End/