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Global poverty a threat to international peace, Republic of Korea's leader tells UN



Republic of Korea President Lee Myung-bak

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The widening gap between the world's rich and poor poses a threat to global peace, the President of the Republic of Korea, Lee Myung-bak, told the General Assembly today, urging affluent nations to step up their efforts to help developing countries achieve economic growth and development.

“It is only when members of the international community share each other's burden and work together in a mutually complementary manner towards the common good that an ‘eco-systemic development’ of the world can be achieved,” Mr. Lee [told](#) the Assembly's annual general debate.

He said foreign aid must be directed to sectors that form the basis of economic development such as infrastructure and international trade.

The Republic of Korea's leader promised that his country would double overseas development aid (ODA) to enable developing countries achieve genuine growth, including achieving the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)).

Mr. Lee also told the Assembly that nuclear terrorism remains the greatest threat to international peace and security, and called for international cooperation to prevent it. He noted that the Republic of Korea would host a nuclear security summit in Seoul in March 2012 and pledged that his country would ensure that the meeting will be an opportunity for the international community to build a solid system of cooperation to prevent nuclear terrorism.

Cautioning against "reckless economic growth that ignores environmental warnings," Mr. Lee said humanity must protect the environment while promoting economic development.

"We must use less fossil fuel and more renewable energy, while promoting the use of safer nuclear energy," said Mr. Lee. "The green technology devoted to meet these goals will create more jobs for people and enable us to attain sustainable economic growth for decades to come," he added.

He said hoped to see the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) enjoy peace and prosperity, and become a responsible member of the international community.

"When DPRK chooses the path to mutual benefit and common prosperity, we will be ready to help in this endeavour along with the international community. I sincerely hope that this will transform the Korean Peninsula from a place of conflict and strife into a bedrock of peace in North-East Asia and the world," he said.

Meanwhile, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today [welcomed](#) Japan's recently appointed Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda to the United Nations and expressed appreciation of the country's active participation in the Organization's affairs. Mr. Ban also reiterated the UN's support for the reconstruction work in Japan following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in March.

The two leaders also discussed nuclear safety and exchanged views on the situation in Korean Peninsula.

Separately, Mr. Ban also had a [meeting](#) with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi, during which they exchanged views on the situation in the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East peace process, Sudan and Libya.

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