

‘I will convey K-SME tariff difficulties to U.S. government’

Kim Ki-moon, convention chair, visits venue to inspect site

The 23rd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC), where Korean businesspeople from all over the world are set to gather, is scheduled to be held in Atlanta, United States, from April 17 to 20. Chairman Kim Ki-moon of the Korea Federation of SMEs, who is presiding over the convention, visited the site in advance to check the preparations. He plans to invite political figures, including Kelly Loeffler, the administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, to the convention to seek cooperation in resolving difficulties faced by Korean SMEs related to the high tariff policy set by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration.

According to the Korea Federation of SMEs, Kim visited the Gas South Convention Center in Atlanta on March 18 and 19 to inspect the status of preparations for the 23rd WKBC. Kim was accompanied by Lee Kyung-chul, president of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA (KACCUSA), and Kim Min-chul, director of the Exchange and Cooperation Department at the OKA, along with about 20 officials from the hosting and supervising organizations.

Chairman Kim reviewed the preparations for key programs, including the opening ceremony, the corporate booths exhibition, and networking with economic officials from the U.S. federal and state governments, to ensure the successful hosting of the convention and discussed detailed implementation plans for each major event.

The WKBC is a global economic event held annually with the goal of strengthening networks through exchanges among Korean businesspeople around the world and supporting the overseas expansion of domestic small and medium-sized enterprises. This year's convention is hosted by the Korea Federation of SMEs, the OKA and the KACCUSA, and is held under the slogan, "Leaping into the Global Korean Economic Zone, to the World of Korea with Korean Business! To the Future!"

Chairman Kim served as the honorary chairman of the 21st WKBC held in Anaheim, U.S., in 2023 and is serving as the official chair of this year's convention. This is the first time that a Korean businessman or the chairman of the Korea Federation of SMEs has served as the chair of the WKBC. The reason Kim is presiding over the convention as president of the Korea Federation of SMEs is to create opportunities for active exchanges with Korean



Kim Ki-moon (2nd from L), chairman of the Korea Federation of SMEs, checks preparations at the Gas South Convention Center in Atlanta, U.S., where the 23rd World Korean Business Convention will be held from April 17 to 20. (Photo courtesy of the Korea Federation of SMEs)

businesspeople around the world and to lay the foundation for domestic SMEs to enter overseas markets.

"Last year, South Korea's exports ranked sixth in the world, and more than 40 percent of them came from SMEs," he said. "I will make this convention an opportunity to widely publicize the excellent products of our SMEs to the world and expand exports."

This year's WKBC plans to discover excellent domestic SME products, such as K-beauty and food, and set up approximately 400 corporate exhibition booths.

Kim plans to use this event as a venue for civil diplomacy and to work on securing the competitiveness of domestic small and medium-sized enterprises exporting to the U.S. in relation to the U.S. tariff policy. The U.S. recently announced 25 percent tariffs on steel and aluminum, and the reciprocal tariffs targeting 21 countries scheduled to be announced on April 2 are expected to have a significant impact on Korean SMEs that directly export to the U.S. or supply large U.S. exporters.

"I will meet with federal government officials, such as SBA Administrator Loeffler, and state government economic officials, such as Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, to convey the difficulties that Korean SMEs are facing due to the U.S. high tariff policy," Kim said. "I also plan to actively inform them of the importance and expected effects of economic cooperation between Korea and the U.S." 🇺🇸