

51 politicians from 10 countries gather to discuss global leadership roles

Hosting organization World Korean Politicians Council elects Melissa Lee, New Zealand MP, as next chairperson

The 11th World Korean Politicians Forum, aimed at fostering exchanges and cooperation among Korean politicians worldwide, concluded Sept. 5 after a three-night, four-day schedule.

Hosted by the World Korean Politicians Council (Chairperson Cindy Ryu, Washington state representative, U.S.) and sponsored by the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center (Director Kim Young-geun), the forum took place at The Plaza Hotel in Seoul starting Sept. 2, with the participation of 51 Korean politicians from 10 countries.

Sharing the outcomes discussed at the forum, participants agreed to: ▲ Embrace diversity, ▲ Implement cultural diplomacy initiatives, ▲ Enhance capabilities through continuous education and ▲ Expand the network of Korean politicians as a global platform that contributes not only to Korean communities but also to the development of the countries where they reside.

Participants in the Russia and CIS subcommittee emphasized intergenerational experience sharing and supporting the growth of young politicians, proposing strategies for sustainable development in local communities and the Korean diaspora.

The global subcommittee shared approaches for positively embracing “dual identity” and expanding political influence through multiethnic solidarity and increased civic participation.

The North American regional session agreed to promote unity within the Korean community and expand its global influence by leveraging the role and potential of Korean American politicians, addressing language barriers and identifying establishment challenges, mentoring the next generation of politicians, expanding cultural and language programs, and strengthening policy support and solidarity.

‘We will serve as development platform for both our homeland and countries of residence’

Participants visited the National Museum of Korea and the Integrated Transportation Control Center on the third day, Sept. 4, experiencing Korea’s history, culture and advanced systems. They also witnessed Korea’s potential as a cultural diplomacy asset firsthand through a night tour of Changgyeong Palace and traditional costume experiences.



The 51 Korean politicians from 10 countries participating in the 11th World Korean Politicians Forum pose for a commemorative photo in front of Myeongjeong Gate while wearing “hanbok” during their visit to Changgyeong Palace on Sept. 4.

On the morning of Sept. 5, the final day of the forum, at an internal meeting of the World Korean Politicians Council, the following members were newly elected as regional representatives: Virginia House Rep. Shin Jae-yeon (U.S.), Mukilteo Councilor Moon Tae-won (Washington, U.S.), British Columbia Rep. Choi Byeong-ha (Canada), former Canadian Northwest Territories Health Minister Lee Seung-shin, U.K. London Borough of Hammersmith Council Member Kwon Bo-ra, People’s Representative Council of Yakkasaray District Member Lee Igor (Tashkent, Uzbekistan), Almaty Council Member Yelena Zhelayeva (Kazakhstan), Veliky Novgorod Duma Council Member Yevgeny Kim (Russia) and New Zealand MP Melissa Lee.

Among the nine regional representatives, Melissa Lee was elected as chairperson of the World Korean Politicians Council through a vote.

‘I will take lead in advancing rights and interests of Korean communities worldwide’

“We will strive to become a council that truly lives up to the elevated status of our homeland and our overseas compatriots, taking the lead in enhancing Korean political power and advancing the rights and interests of Korean communities in each country,” Lee said after her appointment.

Kim Young-geun, director of the Overseas Koreans Cooperation



Participants pose for a commemorative photo at the closing ceremony of the 11th World Korean Politicians Forum held by the World Korean Politicians Council and the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center at The Plaza Hotel Seoul on Sept. 5.

Center, remarked: "In this global era, the network of Korean politicians and the enhancement of Korean political power are becoming increasingly important. We will support the World Korean Politicians Forum so that it can continue to grow as a global community encompassing both the motherland, the Republic of Korea and Korean politicians worldwide."

The opening ceremony, held earlier on Sept. 2, was attended by global politicians of Korean descent, as well as officials from the Korean National Assembly and the government.

National Assembly Speaker Woo: 'Your dedication and passion have greatly elevated our nation's international standing'

Domestic attendees included Foreign Minister Cho Hyun, Democratic Party lawmaker Kim Sang-wook, OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, Parliamentarian's Society of the Republic of Korea Chairman Chung Dae-chul, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Korea Alisher Abdusalomov, Seoul Metropolitan Council Chairman Choi Ho-jeong, Seoul Metropolitan Council Member Kim Won-tae and World Federation of Overseas Korean Traders Associations (World-OKTA) Vice President Hwang Sun-yang.

This year's forum featured the participation of the next generation of politicians and a high proportion of politicians from Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region. Young politicians from various countries participated, creating a forum for exchange that transcended generations and regions, including ▲ Lee Igor, member of the Tashkent City Council, Uzbekistan (born 1982), ▲ Kim Yevgeny, member of the Veliky Novgorod City Duma, Russia (born 1985), ▲ Shim Dmitri, member of the Temirtau City Council, Kazakhstan (born 1985), ▲ Choi Byeong-ha, member of the Legislative Assembly of British

Columbia, Canada (born 1986), ▲ Shin Jae-yeon, member of the Virginia House of Representatives, U.S. (born 1987), ▲ Mario Benavente, Fayetteville city council member, North Carolina, U.S. (born 1990), ▲ Lee Su-jeong, Monash city council member, Victoria, Australia (born 1993, youngest participant).

"I hope this will be an opportunity to share the expertise, influence and practical capabilities demanded by today's international community from Korean politicians, based on the spirit of the era of K-leadership that the world is watching, and to explore ways to enhance the political power of our compatriot community," Chairperson Cindy Ryu said in her opening remarks.

National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik said in a video congratulatory address: "Your dedication and passion are boosting the pride of the Korean community and greatly elevating the international standing of the Republic of Korea. I hope that, based on the K-spirit, you will be a source of strength for each other and open paths to cooperation with the wider world."

Kim Young-geun, director of the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center, welcomed participants, saying: "The achievements and dedication of Korean politicians worldwide, made under difficult conditions in various countries, are a great source of pride for us all. We will steadfastly support the exchange and cooperation taking place over the four-day schedule and do our utmost to ensure the mutual development of both the countries of residence and the homeland."

Following the opening ceremony, a welcome dinner hosted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs was held. At the event, Minister Cho Hyun praised the attendees, stating, "Korean politicians are leaders who serve the citizens of their countries of residence and are a valuable bridge connecting the Republic of Korea and the world." 장