

## Korean Adoptee Conference concludes successfully, reaffirms roots, identity, solidarity

OKA Commissioner Kim: ‘Support for adoptees will be top priority in overseas Korean policies’  
First lady Kim: ‘Republic of Korea will become homeland that sincerely supports future of adoptees’

The 2025 World Korean Adoptee Conference, hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup), concluded at the Nongshim Hotel in Dongnae-gu, Busan, reaffirming “roots, Korean identity and solidarity with the homeland.”

Held over five days, starting Nov. 10, under the slogan “Connecting Roots, Building the Future Together,” the conference saw participation from 90 adopted compatriots from 10 countries.

This conference was planned with a focus on helping the approximately 200,000 adopted Korean compatriots worldwide restore their strong bonds with their homeland and cultivate their Korean identity as vital members of the global Korean network.

Most participants were visiting their homeland for the first time, and they experienced Korean history and culture in Incheon, Paju, Ulsan and Busan while also enjoying networking opportunities.

“Through experiencing Korean history and culture, volunteering in meal distribution and environmental beautification, and participating in agricultural activities, we reaffirmed our Korean identity and bond with our homeland, while also gaining opportunities to form networks among adoptees,” the adoptees said in a joint statement.

### Visiting Paju's Mother's Embrace Park for healing

They visited Mother's Embrace Park in Paju, Gyeonggi Province, for a time of comfort and healing. The adoptees toured the Wall of Memory and the Peace Museum, experiencing spaces imbued with

meaning for remembrance and consolation.

Some participants quietly folded their hands before the Wall of Memory, while others patted each other's shoulders and shared stories for a long time. Others were seen reading the stories and looking at the photos of 900 adoptees displayed at the Peace Museum and taking pictures of them.

Attorney Carrie Rosser (Korean name: Ham Chorong, 49), who came from the United States, stood motionless for a while in front of the Wall of Memory, looking at cards bearing the names of adoptees.

“If Korea had been a country in my heart until now, today it became the land I actually stand upon,” she said. “Here I can feel



OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup delivers opening remarks.



Participants pose for a commemorative photo at the opening ceremony of the 2025 World Korean Adoptee Conference held at the Sheraton Grand Incheon Hotel in Songdo, Incheon, on Nov. 10.



First lady Kim Hea Kyung delivers a video congratulatory address.

memory in the air, the trees and even an individual stone.”

Laurent Dumoulin (Korean name: Lee Jae-dong, 43), president of the Korean Roots Association (Racines Coreennes) and an adoptee from France, said, “Hearing the message ‘We have not been forgotten’ directly warmed the deepest part of my heart.”

Mother’s Embrace Park is a symbolic space created on a portion of the former Camp Howze U.S. military base site (610,000 m2), covering an area of 2,224 m2. It embodies the meaning that “The children who have returned are embraced once more.”

### Exploring global network cooperation strategies

This year’s conference also saw participation from 16 leaders of global adoptee organizations. They held regional breakout sessions and a leaders’ forum to share common challenges and explore strategies for global network cooperation.

The leaders engaged in in-depth discussions on strengthening organizational and leadership capabilities, policy participation, and concurrently hosting the 2026 World Korean Adoptee Conference and a World Korean Adoptee Association homeland visit event.

At the closing ceremony, an implementation document was adopted pledging to resolve current issues in cooperation with the homeland, including: ▲ establishing cooperative systems and strengthening policy communication for mutual development between the homeland and adoptees, ▲ expanding support for the global adoptee network and leadership, ▲ increasing support for the children of adoptees as the next generation of compatriots, and ▲ strengthening support for adoptee communities by country and region.

The OKA will actively incorporate participants’ voices into future policies and projects, build sustainable networks through cooperation with overseas adoptee organizations worldwide and strengthen practical administrative support centered around dedicated service channels.

### 90 participants from 10 countries; most visiting their homeland for first time

At the opening ceremony on Nov. 10 at the Sheraton Grand Incheon Hotel in Songdo, Incheon, OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup stated: “We respect the arduous journey each of you has undertaken through the adoption process in your respective countries. We will further expand the ‘Roots Search’ program in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the National Center for the Rights of the Child (NCRC) and overseas adoptee organizations.”

He further emphasized that he would adopt supporting adoptees as a top priority in overseas Korean policies, stating, “We will create a more comprehensive support system so that adoptees can regain their pride as part of the Korean people and enjoy stable lives.”

“I express my deep respect for adopted compatriots who have grown up splendidly while preserving their roots as Koreans,” first lady Kim Hea Kyung said in a video address. “We will become a true homeland that deeply empathizes with the experiences of adopted compatriots and sincerely supports their future.”

In his welcome address, Director Jeong Ik-jung of the NCRC explained: “On July 19 of this year, a major change that alters 70 years of history occurred, shifting from a private adoption agency-led system to a state-led adoption system. We have signed a business agreement with the National Archives of Korea to ensure adoption records are preserved and managed in a secure environment.”

At the closing ceremony on Nov. 14, OKA Vice Commissioner Byeon Cheol-hwan pledged: “You are the very history of the Republic of Korea, having overcome adversity and successfully settled in your countries. You are the link connecting Korea and the world. The OKA will be a reliable support system for adopted compatriots to grow as proud Koreans in their countries of residence.” 