

Supporting settlement preparations before return; full-scale pre-entry education under way

OKA discusses cooperation with IOM to support compatriots wishing to return to Korea

Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup met with International Organization for Migration (IOM) Deputy Director-General Lee Sung-ah on Jan. 8 to discuss pre-entry education and support measures for compatriots wishing to settle in Korea.

The IOM is a U.N.-mandated international organization in the field of migration, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, with offices in over 171 countries worldwide.

It carries out activities including: ▲ advising and consulting on government migration policies, ▲ identifying and supporting victims of human trafficking, ▲ supporting refugee resettlement, ▲ strengthening disaster response capabilities and ▲ improving awareness in the field of migration.



OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup (L) meets with IOM Deputy Director-General Lee Sung-ah.

This meeting coincided with Deputy Director Lee Sung-ah's tour of Asia and visit to Korea, marking the first time a Korean national has been appointed to a senior position at IOM.

Deputy Director Lee stated during the meeting, "Since 2005, IOM has worked closely with government ministries and public institutions through its Korea office," and proposed a pre-entry education program for repatriated compatriots, including Koryoin,

prior to their arrival in Korea.

In response, Commissioner Kim said, "Since 2025, the OKA has recognized the issue of insufficient information and the preparation needed in the pre-return stage of supporting the settlement of compatriots with foreign nationality in Korea," expressing his intention to actively accept the proposal.

'Specialized department to assist 860,000 returning compatriots settling in Korea'

OKA establishes Returning Compatriots Settlement Support Division; promoting education, talent attraction, rights enhancement

The Overseas Koreans Agency has established a new Returning Compatriots Settlement Support Division to help compatriots who have lived overseas and returned to Korea settle stably into our society.

Currently, approximately 860,000 returning compatriots reside in Korea. While they share language, culture and ethnic identity with our citizens, they have faced difficulties in their daily lives and settlement process due to the lack of a dedicated department to support them.

The OKA began supporting returning compatriots last April through the temporary Domestic Compatriot Support Task Force. However, as the number of returning compatriots continues to grow and support demands increase, it was determined that a dedicated



Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup (R) pushes a permanently returning Sakhalin compatriot in a wheelchair.

department was necessary.

The newly established Returning Compatriots Settlement Support Division will pursue the following tasks: ▲ supporting projects by local governments and private sector organizations, ▲ developing and operating settlement education programs tailored to the age and circumstances of compatriots, ▲ attracting and supporting the settlement of outstanding compatriot talent in Korea, ▲ conducting surveys and research related to repatriated compatriots in Korea,

and ▲ collaborating with relevant ministries and related agencies. Through this the OKA will carry out its national policy task and key priority of "strengthening support for repatriated compatriots in Korea."

