

OPENING REMARKS

On behalf of the Korea Ocean Research and Development Institute (KORDI), I would like to welcome all of you, speakers and observers, to the Third International Symposium on Antarctic Science. You are all distinguished scholars, and each one of you represents the best in your profession. More importantly, you have been engaged for many years in a pioneering effort to accelerate research in the area which is relatively less known to us but promises to be the major source of resources for the future generations.

This year, we are celebrating our twentieth anniversary. KORDI, a research institute dedicated towards the advancement of Korea's ocean policies, has already accomplished much and has adopted a reputation as being an overall, outstanding ocean research and development institute in this country as well as around the world. Within its research scope, KORDI operates many national projects such as the Pacific Deep Seabed Mining Study, the installation of the Korean Antarctic Station and polar research. By the persistent development of ocean science and technology, and by the acute awareness of preserving the marine environment within a constantly changing globe, KORDI, through its research activities, has been able to actively serve both the interests of Korea and those abroad.

As all of you are well aware, through the conclusion of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, the Antarctica was declared to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord. For over three decades, the Treaty has proven an effective instrument in fulfilling the purposes for which it was concluded and in meeting new challenges. In addition, the Treaty has developed effective measures to protect Antarctica's extremely fragile environment, including the marine living resources of the continent. Since the early 1960's more than one hundred sixty environmental protection recommendations have been adopted. Nowadays, these endeavors culminated in the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. And more than twenty areas of particular ecological interest have been set aside as specially protected areas in which human activity is banned. This strong environmental concern has become a tradition of the Antarctic Treaty. The protection and preservation of the Antarctic environment continues to be a major concern and all countries are giving increasing attention to keeping human impact to an absolute minimum. One of the main reason for this is to ensure that we do have an uncontaminated place from which to measure changes occurring in the rest of the world and thus continue to be able to bring attention to the international community when a global problem is identified from Antarctica.

I am confident that in the future, scientific research conducted in the Antarctica, will become increasingly important in recognizing and solving global problems. Also, the greater internationalization of Antarctic research should lead to accelerating the flow of knowledge about Antarctica both within the Antarctic community and to the outside world as well. Viewed in this context, this international symposium on Antarctic science is just the thing we need and its importance can never be overemphasized. Five years ago, Korea has established a permanent Antarctic research station at the Barton peninsula, King George Island. Korea has become the 18th country that inaugurated a over-wintering station in the Antarctica. By actively engaging in scientific research in Antarctica, Korea would like to enlarge its polar-related knowledge and thus will contribute to the development of the Antarctic science.

Since we came here to talk about Antarctic science, I dare to say that we are now united in one on the antarctic issue. We should contribute to widespread international support for the continuity of peaceful cooperation in Antarctic scientific research and for the global environmental preservation. Once again, I sincerely welcome all of you and hope that your stay in Seoul will be both rewarding and enjoyable.

Thank you.

Won-Oh Song
President of KORDI