

Statement delivered by Senator the Honourable Dennis Moses,
Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs,
at the Reception in commemoration of the
National Foundation Day of the Republic of Korea
Queen's Hall, September 17, 2018

Your Excellency Sung Moon-up, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, and
Mrs. Cho Wooh-yun;

Your Excellencies, Head of Mission, and other members of the Diplomatic
Corps;

Permanent Secretaries;

Your Worship the Mayor of Port of Spain, Alderman Joel Martinez, and
Mrs. Martinez;

Members of staff of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea;

Specially invited guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good evening.

On behalf of Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, it is my pleasure to extend best wishes to the Government and People of the Republic of Korea on the occasion of the National Foundation Day, an annual commemoration of the genesis of Korea.

I wish to warmly welcome Ambassador Sung and Mrs. Cho, who arrived in Trinidad and Tobago in May of this year and are presiding over their first National Day reception. Ambassador, I hope that you and your family settle in well, and enjoy the art, culture, food and nature that Trinidad and Tobago offers.

There is an adage that says, “little drops of water make the mighty ocean.” So too it was with Korea, progressing over the course of several centuries into the modern, magnificent nation of today. The Republic of Korea is now a major donor of technical assistance and a global force to be reckoned with in numerous fields, including manufacturing and shipbuilding. This state of affairs is truly a testament to the vision and hard work of the Korean people.

Korea’s progress occurred in spite of, rather than without, domestic and external challenges. This year has been marked by a change in the management of tensions on the Korean Peninsula, with the first Inter-Korean Summit in over a decade being held in April of this year. With a view to achieving a peaceful resolution, the global community, including Trinidad and Tobago, supports that dialogue and is pleased that those efforts are ongoing, as demonstrated by a third Summit scheduled to be held this week.

Ambassador, the development of a bilateral relationship also requires many consistent “little drops”. Fortunately, Trinidad and Tobago and Korea have both been committed to widening its relationship since the establishment of diplomatic relations in July of 1985. Initially focused on the provision of technical assistance, the relationship has expanded into the forging of economic, cultural and academic ties.

Over the course of the last year, Trinidad and Tobago benefitted from the transfer of skills and knowledge from Korea in the form of training and scholarships. Recently, two (2) nationals joined others already in Korea to commence engineering studies at the Masters level while a public sector official embarked on a short-term course in the field of rural development.

The Embassy’s annual cross-cultural initiatives are now awaited with great anticipation, with its Film Week and cultural shows being well attended – there is no doubt that tomorrow’s “Drawing Show”, of which we will get a sample this evening, will be no exception. Such activities help bring our people closer together, even if the “ocean” between us is vast.

Trinidad and Tobago and Korea have also sought to create larger pools of dialogue and cooperation. In this regard, senior officials participated in the June of this year Korea-Latin America and the Caribbean Future Cooperation Forum regarding smart cities and urban regeneration while in December of last year, Trinidad and Tobago was represented at a CELAC-Korea capacity building workshop on small and medium enterprises.

Ambassador, as I conclude, I take this opportunity to recognise and applaud your efforts thus far to strengthen the bonds between Trinidad and Tobago and Korea. It is my hope that through our collaborative effort, the bilateral relationship will venture into new and promising areas of cooperation, eventually becoming that mighty, limitless ocean.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Please join me in offering a toast to the Government and People of the Republic of Korea in celebration of the National Foundation Day.