

Independence, Sovereignty and Social Development

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Esteemed Chairman Prof. Matteo Carbonelli,

Respected Prof. Ramon Jimenez Lopez,

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Respected Vice-President of the KASS,

Dear comrades and friends.

At the outset, I would like to compliment the International Institute of the Juche idea for holding the International seminar in Rome, Italy on the very auspicious and significant occasion of the 75th Founding Anniversary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

On this occasion, before I make my presentation on the theme of the seminar "Independence, Sovereignty and Social Development," I would like to pay deepest regards on my own behalf and on behalf of the Asian Regional Institute of the Juche idea to Great Leader eternal President Kim Il Sung who propounded the Juche idea and after a long and arduous struggle freed Korea from the brutal colonial rule of the Japanese imperialism.

We would also take this opportunity to remember and pay our respects to the eternal General Secretary Kim Jong Il who further developed and enriched the Juche idea and highlighted the significance of the Songun politics essential for safeguarding the independence and sovereignty of the country.

We, the Juche followers from Asia, are proud of General Secretary H.E. Kim Jong Un who with Kimilsungism- Kimjongilism as a guiding ideology has built the DPRK into a mighty self reliant Juche socialist country.

As a matter of fact, Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism is the most potent and pragmatic guiding ideology of the present Era, as it guarantees independence and sovereignty to all the countries and nations of the world which aspire for the same.

Now coming to the theme of the seminar, we all know that the Juche idea advocates independence. President Kim IL Sung said:

"Independence is an attribute of man who is desirous of living freely."

As a matter of fact, as independence is the life and soul of a man, so is also the life and soul for a country or for a nation.

Great leader Kim Jong Il also said "Realising worldwide independence by opposing the domination and subjugation of one country and nation by another and inequality among nations is a major requirement of the Juche idea which it advocates."

The idea of global independence is the one that applies to the Juche idea.

The Juche idea whose fundamental principle is that one is the master of his destiny and has the strength capable of carving out his destiny, considers it as the fundamental requirement to defend independence of a country or of a nation.

Independence of a man or a nation depends upon self reliance. In other words, independence clearly means self reliance and independence is the basic constituent of the Juche philosophy.

According to Great Leader President Kim Il Sung, "Establishing Juche means in a nutshell, being the master of revolution in our own country.

"This means holding fast to an independent position, rejecting dependence on others, using one's own brain, believing in one's own strength, displaying the revolutionary spirit of self reliance and thus solving one's own problems for oneself on one's responsibility under all circumstances."

President Kim Il Sung through his tireless efforts and chivalrous deeds infused new life in his people; taught them the lesson of self reliance and freed his country from the bondage of the Japanese imperialism. His entire life is a message of self dependence, self reliance and independence.

Eternal General Secretary Kim Jong Il also explained in his book "on the Juche idea" that a self reliant state can be achieved through establishing independence in politics, self sufficiency in the economy and self reliance in defence."

Today DPRK is one of the mightiest nations in the world with strong military power and nuclear deterrent. Therefore, no country can dare to trample the independence and sovereignty of the DPRK. This position it could achieve because of the ideology of the Songun politics of General Secretary Kim Jong Il.

It openly and correctly calls for the full military preparations and to be self reliant to defend oneself. In the words of General Secretary Kim Jong Il, it is the bulwark against

unethical and wanton aggression of the imperialists for self defence. He therefore keeping in mind the principle of self reliance eulogised the ideology of Songun politics, saying that our aim should be Army-first or self reliance in the military preparations. He further said in a figurative way "We can make our country like a porcupine which no enemy dare to attack if we attach importance to military affairs, sincerely support the people's army, arm all the people and fortify the whole country."

Today the DPRK is a strong, self reliant, independent and sovereign state because of the Juche philosophy which is the guiding ideology of the DPRK in the revolution and construction since its foundation. Despite of the unjustified and immoral UN sanctions against the DPRK at the behest of the imperialists and also despite of the constant threats of the military actions by them, the DPRK has made spectacular development in every field of the economy, including in the fields of social development since its foundation 75 years ago.

Social Development as we all understand means improving the well-being of every individual in the society so that they can reach at their full potential. The success of the society is linked to the well-being of every citizen of the society.

The Juche idea is a man-centred idea. Every activity in the society revolves around man only and, therefore, all the policies by the Government are made keeping in mind the welfare of the common man.

Therefore Social Development is given due priority in DPRK.

There are several indicators of Social Development in any society.

Some of the indicators of the Social Development are Education, Health, Life expectancy, Infant mortality, Income distribution, Availability of food, Basic housing facilities, Employment, crime and safety situations, so on and so forth.

In DPRK, education is seen as a social agenda. The Government tries to ensure that every individual has access to quality education so that they become productive citizens. Education is the backbone of all the societies. It is the foundation on which individuals and communities build their future and create opportunities for people to lead a just and ethical livelihood. Without education, no country or nation can achieve Social Development. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, a renowned seer of India "All the wealth of the world cannot help even a small village if the people are not taught to help themselves." Our work should be mainly educational, both moral and intellectual. In

short, the importance of education cannot be overstated"

The development of the national education in Korea during the brutal colonial rule of the Japanese imperialists was extremely restricted and by obliterating their national education, the country was reduced to a barren land of education. They wanted Koreans to remain in the darkness of ignorance.

At the time of liberation of Korea (August 15, 1945) about 2.3 million people amounting for 80 percent of adults were illiterate.

There were only a few middle schools catering for the children of the rich class because of the exorbitant fees in those schools. Most of the other children were denied access to school education. There were no colleges or universities in Korea. After liberation, building a sound educational system was a Herculean task because it had to start from scratch.

From over more than 75 years of liberation up to now, in the DPRK, free universal education up to 12th standards has been introduced and every member of the younger generation studies to the best of his ability at the state expenses.

In the fields of the higher education, on September 15 ,1946, the first Kim Il Sung University was established. In the year 1949, 15 colleges and 55 technical schools were set up. With the passage of time, more and more colleges, universities and institutions of specialised higher education have been established. Every province has colleges of technology, light industries, agriculture, medicine, science and technology and teachers training institutions. It is heartening to note that under the able and dynamic leadership of General Secretary H.E. Kim Jong Un and with the commitment of the WPK, a very sound and modern educational system with 100 percent literacy rate has been established in the DPRK.

Further, the health of its citizens is given due priority in the DPRK. The commitment to health care is evidenced by constitutionally guaranteed free health facilities, a robust health work force backed by a steady availability of trained personnel and sustained investment in health.

Article 15 of the DPRK constitution stipulates "The state shall reasonably arrange and manage in an up to date way the hospitals and clinics throughout the city and rural communities, factories, seaside villages, forest villages and shall establish specialised hospitals and sanatoriums, including mid wifely hospitals in every place and ceaselessly

improve the level of specialised medical care in order for people to get treated wherever and whenever without inconvenience."

The DPRK has a huge network of medical establishments like general hospitals, specialised hospitals and clinics from the highest down to the lowest unit of administration like *ri* and *dong*. The DPRK has 133 provincial hospitals, 1608 county level hospitals, 6263 clinics at village level besides Pyongyang General hospital, Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, Okryu Children Hospital, etc.

Despite of many economic challenges, the DPRK Government under the leadership of H.E. Kim Jong Un has continued to allocate significant funds towards health. In the year 2016 (available data) the DPRK had spent 6.1 percent of its GDP on health. People in the DPRK are enjoying good health because of the excellent self reliant medical care system there.

Now let us look at the situation of the Life expectancy in the DPRK.

Life expectancy in a country depends on several factors, for example, environment, standards of living, more effective health system and more resources invested in the determinants of health, i.e., sanitation, housing and levels of education.

In the year 2022, on the global scale the life expectancy for males was 70 years and 75 years for females. As compared to this the life expectancy in the DPRK in the year 2019 was estimated at 72.3 years.

In the DPRK, the mortality rate of children under five years of age in the year 2019 was very low as it was 17.3 deaths per 1000 births. As compared to this, the mortality rate under five years of age in developing countries was 54 per 1000 and in under developed countries or least developed countries, it was 86 per 1000 live births.

The extent of the Social Development in a country is also indicated by the availability of the housing facilities and adequate supplies of food to all the people in the country. In the DPRK every family has been provided free houses to live and subsidised food is provided to all people. Therefore, no one sleeps on the road and no one sleeps hungry there.

Level of employment is also another indicator of Social Development in a country. In the DPRK, there is hardly any unemployment because the Government provides employment to all the adults who are physically and mentally fit.

To conclude my speech, I will say that after independence, during all these years,

the DPRK has made spectacular achievements in all the fields of the economy including that of Social Development.

In the end, on the significant and auspicious occasion of the 75th Founding Anniversary of the DPRK which is a Juche self reliant, independent and sovereign socialist state, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to warmly greet General Secretary H.E. Kim Jong Un on my own behalf and on behalf of the Asian Regional Institute of the Juche Idea and wish him and all the Korean comrades a still bright future ahead. We also wish an early reunification of Korea to restore permanent peace in the Korean Peninsula, a long cherished unanimous desire of all the Koreans.