

Madame First Lady Kim Jung-sook's speech at the 'Shared Future, Global Solidarity' event

*The following is an unofficial translation of First Lady Kim Jung-sook's speech at the 'Shared Future, Global Solidarity' event at the International Vaccine Institute on July 8, 2020.*

Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here with you at the IVI headquarters.

Before I begin, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Director General Jerome Kim and fellow IVI staff as well as the Korea Support Committee for IVI and all partners for organizing today's special event.

I would also like to thank the representatives of the diplomatic corps who are with us today for your support and participation. Your presence demonstrates the affirmation of global solidarity and cooperation in the midst of extraordinary challenges and uncertainties.

The Government of the Republic of Korea hosted IVI in 1997 in effort to make vaccination easily accessible for global public health. It is the first international organization headquartered in the country. Over the past 23 years, Korea has provided full-fledged support to IVI with a strong commitment to the development and equitable distribution of vaccines for 'a world free of suffering from infectious diseases.'

Viruses know no borders and race. Unfortunately, however, vaccines are not available and accessible to everyone and everywhere.

Under the vision of "Vaccine without Borders," IVI developed the world's first low-cost oral cholera vaccine and has introduced it to more than 20 countries at risk of cholera. A new typhoid conjugate vaccine, which can be given to infants and children, is near commercialization, raising our hope that we can save the lives of many more children around

the world.

IVI, indeed, has played a pivotal role in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as promoting equality and eradicating poverty. I extend my sincere respect and gratitude to IVI for their dedication and hard work.

These noteworthy achievements of IVI, however, would not have been possible without global solidarity, cooperation and support from both public and private sectors.

I thank Sweden, India, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and other partners for their support and cooperation; they have been the main driving force behind IVI's success. I am also grateful to KSC for its patronage and confidence in IVI. But more importantly, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of IVI's multinational researchers who have been working around the clock in the labs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is going through unprecedented challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. With the adoption of advanced diagnostic technology, transparent information sharing, and thorough response, Korea is exerting utmost efforts to overcome this crisis. However, the global spread of COVID-19 has been unpredictable and rapid; the death toll and number of confirmed cases continue to rise day by day. Without vaccines in place, we are weighted with great pain and sorrow. Developing a safe and effective vaccine against COVID-19 has indeed become an urgent priority for humankind.

Viruses and infectious disease problems are directly linked to global economy and security. Yet in many parts of the world, 'Vaccine Nationalism' is emerging in the race for a COVID-19 cure. "Global solidarity" has become ever more pressing.

Against this backdrop, President Moon Jae-in requested global support to and partnership with IVI during his phone calls with Finnish and Swiss Presidents as well as the Korea-EU video conference meeting. Over the phone call in May, Mrs. Elke Büdenbender of Germany and I also shared our understanding that COVID-19 vaccines and treatments should be considered

'21st century global public goods' and used meaningfully to ensure improving the health of people around the world.

Currently, IVI has 35 signatory countries and the World Health Organization on its Establishment Agreement, and Finland and Madagascar's full membership to IVI is in process. Taking this opportunity, I ask other countries around the world to join hands and work with IVI to help save millions through 'Vaccine Solidarity Without Borders'

As Honorary President of the IVI Support Committee, I will also give it my best to strengthen global solidarity and cooperation with IVI.

I hope for a better tomorrow where people live free from fear of viruses and call for strong vaccine solidarity and cooperation to deliver the miracle of life-saving vaccines to everyone and everywhere.

Thank you.