Republic of Korea to Host Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations Conference in Gyeongju, 30 May—1 June

Event to Enable Focus on Education in Pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals

[Source: UN.Org/Press] The United Nations Department of Public Information is pleased to announce that the Republic of Korea has confirmed its desire to host the sixty-sixth Department of Public Information (DPI)/Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Conference in Gyeongju from 30 May to 1 June 2016.

Organized in cooperation with the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, the NGO community, the Government of the Republic of Korea and the National Organizing Committee of Korea, the Conference will be held under the theme “Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together”. It will be the first time for the DPI/NGO Conference to be held in Asia.

The Conference provides a unique opportunity for participating NGOs to engage members of civil society, diplomats, United Nations officials, policy experts, scientists, educators, businesses, trade unions, parliamentarians, local authorities and others from around the world in discussing key issues relevant during that given year. The 2016 Conference will focus on creating and strengthening global partnerships in support of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“The support of civil society as a whole and NGOs and academia in particular will be key to our ability to achieve the sustainable development goals,” said Maher Nasser, Director of the Outreach Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information. He continued, “We are very proud of our
partnership with NGOs and universities and believe that the Gyeongju Conference offers a great opportunity to mobilize civil society’s creative talent and energy to support Agenda 2030 and beyond.”

This is the fifth time that the DPI/NGO Conference is taking place outside United Nations Headquarters in New York. Taking it “on the road” again in 2016 will offer an opportunity to forge new strategic partnerships with NGOs in the Asia region and maximize the participation of regional and local authorities, institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

“The Republic of Korea is pleased to host the sixty-sixth UN DPI/NGO Conference in Gyeongju,” said Oh Joon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations. “We are committed to an inclusive planning process that will allow NGOs, Governments and a broad array of stakeholders to come together at the Conference and ensure that education in all of its forms is leveraged to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.”

The National Organizing Committee of Korea, co-chaired by the President of Handong Global University, Soon-heung Chang, and the President of the National Council of Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) Korea, Il-ha Yi, will work with education and civil society partners, as well as local authorities to support every aspect of the Conference planning and ensure that attendees have a positive and constructive experience in Gyeongju. Mr. Chang observed: “We are thrilled that Korean academia and civil society have this opportunity to play a concrete role in catalysing implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals that can have lasting positive effects for millions.”

Two Conference chairs have been identified through a global online nomination process. Scott Carlin, Associate Professor of Geography at Long Island University and Yukang Choi, CEO of Korean NGO Dream Touch for All, will share the responsibility of shepherding the Conference planning process and multi-stakeholder consultations on the Conference outcome document.

“Education is an essential starting point for global NGO engagement on SDG implementation strategies,” said Mr. Carlin. “The potential for academia and civil society to work together is enormous; through new collaborations, innovative pedagogies and a culture of global citizenship we can build healthier, more resilient Earth communities.”
Mr. Choi added: “Korea is a shining example of how a focus on education can drive rapid and successful development. Korean NGOs will offer a strong platform in Gyeongju for NGOs from around the world to exchange best practices and cooperate in support of Agenda 2030.”

The last DPI/NGO Conference, held under the theme “2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda”, was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 to 29 August 2014. More than 2,200 NGO delegates, representing some 700 organizations from approximately 100 countries took part in the premier United Nations forum for civil society, which resulted in the adoption of a robust Conference Outcome Document reflecting civil society contributions in support of the negotiations on the development of the Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information about the sixty-sixth DPI/NGO Conference, please contact: Department of Public Information — Jeffrey Brez, Co-Chair, Conference Planning Committee, and Chief, NGO Relations and Advocacy, e-mail: brez@un.org, or mobile: +1 917 328 6736; Republic of Korea (NGO Community) — Yukang Choi, Co-Chair, Conference Planning Committee, and CEO, Dream Touch for All, e-mail: info@66undpingoconference.org, or tel.: +82 2 6053 0041; and Civil Society — Bruce Knotts, Chair, NGO/DPI Executive Committee, e-mail: bknotts@uua.org, or mobile: +1 617 948 4287 and +1 703 629 5212.

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