

Greetings to you all.

I am Jae-yoo Lee, the Commissioner of Korea Immigration Service of the Ministry of Justice.

I would first like to congratulate the 70th anniversary of IOM.

With exponential economic growth, Korea transformed from a labour-sending country into a labour-receiving country.

During this process / our cooperation with IOM / played an important role.

I am grateful to have an opportunity to deliver this presentation, which focuses on Korea's immigration policies during the Pandemic at this significant event.

The world was battered with an unprecedented Pandemic since the start of last year.

The Korean government upheld the principle of openness and transparency, thereby minimising obstacles of cross-border movements and introducing measures to monitor and track new arrivals.

Our response to the Pandemic throughout the immigration cycle was introduced to many nations as a fine example.

First of all, we introduced a measure to minimise imported cases of Covid ahead of passengers boarding a Korea-bound flight.

We have been running a system called I-PreChecking from the first of April 2017 to prevent high-risk passengers from boarding flights to Korea.

This system was altered to block attempted entries to Korea from high-risk Covid countries from selected airports overseas.

From the first of September this year, we implemented K-ETA to strengthen pre-screening of passengers and added another layer of border management.

We also introduced a scheme that requires short-term foreign visitors to declare their residential details.

This scheme allows us / to be equipped with up-to-date residential information of short-term foreign visitors to prevent the spread of Covid in Korea after their arrival.

This information is shared with health authorities in a timely manner whenever needed.

We have expanded contact-less immigration services for foreign residents.

They can now apply for a wide array of immigration services online.

We are also granting contact-less visa extensions at our discretion for those who cannot enter their country due to border closures.

Lastly, / but not least, we also support migrants to have access to Covid-related information in their language.

They can reach our Immigration Contact Centre, which runs 24 hours a day.

Service is available in 20 languages.

The Pandemic gave us an opportunity to resort to virtual platforms in offering immigration services.

The Korean government is already taking advantage of such platforms for social integration programmes.

We plan to further develop optimal learning programmes fit for the post-Covid era.

We are also working on to develop a localised version of social integration index, which reflects our unique circumstances.

This index is being developed to evaluate and analyse achievements and areas for improvements of our social integration policies.

We hope to have an opportunity to share our research results with IOM member states.

Until now I have briefly shared our policies and experience in response to the Covid pandemic and our efforts for social integration of migrants.

I wish the information we provided will be helpful for your response to the Pandemic and your efforts to design better policies.

We also hope to learn from your expertise and experience as well.

As we are experiencing the ongoing Pandemic, we have witnessed the virus travelling along with the movement of people.

However, the increasing trend of international migration will continue.

This is a clear indication that border closures are not sustainable measures.

That brings to a conclusion of putting greater emphasis on international cooperation.

International cooperation allows us to strengthen our common responsibilities which opens up the avenue for achieving shared objectives.

The Korean government fully supports activities of IOM and hopes to forge a stronger partnership with IOM.

Thank you.