

Joint Press Release on 18th Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks Published

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The 18th north-south ministerial talks were held here from April 21 to 24. At the talks both sides issued a joint press release after discussing practical issues arising in settling fundamental issues related to the political, military and economic relations between the north and the south and agreeing on them. At the talks both sides agreed on the following points after appreciating the successes made since the publication of the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration and deciding to make positive efforts to put the inter-Korean ties on a higher stage in line with the idea of "By our nation itself":

- 1 The north and the south decided to take practical measures to recognize and respect each other's ideology and system in the basic spirit of the June 15 joint declaration with a view to promoting national reconciliation and confidence.
- 2 They shared the understanding of the necessity to take practical measures for defusing the military tension and ensuring peace on the Korean Peninsula and agreed to cooperate with each other to this end.
- 3 They decided to make sustained efforts for the denuclearization of the peninsula and actively cooperate with each other in the efforts to ensure that the September 19 joint statement is implemented as early as possible to find a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue in line with the common interests and security of the nation.
- 4 They decided to exert efforts for national unity and for the present to ensure that delegations of the authorities of the two sides will take an active part in the grand festival for national reunification to open in the area of the south side on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the June 15 joint declaration with a view to making this national event meaningful.
- 5 They agreed to have economic cooperation substantially conducive to the prosperity common to the nation. They decided to take practical measures to actively boost investment and cooperation in areas, types and scope of business for mutual benefit on the basis of firm understanding that the inter-Korean economic cooperation is cooperation between compatriots and an undertaking for prosperity common to the nation. They agreed to hold the 12th meeting of the North-South Committee for Promotion of Economic Cooperation within May for the present to take up the issues of digging up sand at the mouth of the River Rimjin and developing resources common to the nation and discuss the trial operation of trains, the opening to traffic of railways and roads, the construction of the Kaesong Industrial Zone and cooperation in light industry and the development of underground resources, etc.
- 6 They agreed to cooperate with each other in the efforts to substantially settle the issue of the persons whose whereabouts were unknown during the war and in the subsequent period.

- 7 They decided to push forward cooperation in various fields including the prevention of natural disasters, health service and the preservation of cultural relics.
8. They decided to open the 19th north-south ministerial talks in Pusan from July 11 to 14, 2006.

Source: Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)