

(unofficial translation)

Remarks at the Joint Press Availability
December 28, 2015

Minister Yun:

Good afternoon. Today, I had in-depth consultations with Minister Kishida on matters of mutual interest, including the “comfort women” issue.

First of all, I would like to thank Minister Kishida for taking the time out of his busy schedule to attend this meeting today.

As you are well aware, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties between Korea and Japan. My government has been sparing no efforts to work out an early resolution of the “comfort women” issue, the most crucial history-related issue between Korea and Japan, in this historic year.

In particular, thanks to the political decision made by President Park and Prime Minister Abe at the November 2nd summit to “accelerate consultations to settle the ‘comfort women’ issue at the earliest possible date, bearing in mind that this year marks a turning point in the relations between the two countries as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties,” bilateral consultations have been further expedited centering around the Director-General level meetings as a major channel.

Minister Kishida and I held an intensive round of consultations today, based on the results of the consultations held through various channels, including yesterday’s 12th Director-General level meeting.

As a result, we have been able to reach an agreement acceptable to both sides. So, here today, we would like to announce the results of our meeting today.

First, Minister Kishida will state the position of the Government of Japan on today's agreement on behalf of the Government of Japan, and then, I will share with you the position of the Government of the Republic of Korea.

Minister Kishida:

The issue of “comfort women” has been intensively discussed so far between Japan and Korea, including through the Director-General level meetings. Based on those outcomes, the Government of Japan states the following.

The issue of “comfort women” was a matter which, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. In this regard, the Government of Japan painfully acknowledges its responsibility.

Prime Minister Abe, in his capacity as Prime Minister of Japan, expresses anew sincere apologies and remorse from the bottom of his heart to all those who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as “comfort women.”

The Government of Japan has been seriously dealing with this issue, and on the basis of such experience, will take measures with its own budget to heal the psychological wounds of all the former “comfort women.”

More specifically, the Government of the Republic of Korea will

establish a foundation for the purpose of providing assistance to the former “comfort women.” The Government of Japan will contribute from its budget a lump sum funding to this foundation. The Governments of Korea and Japan will cooperate to implement programs to restore the honor and dignity and to heal the psychological wounds of all the former “comfort women.”

Along with what was stated above, the Government of Japan confirms that through today’s statement, this issue will be finally and irreversibly resolved on the condition that the above-mentioned measures are faithfully implemented. Also, the Government of Japan, along with the Government of the Republic of Korea, will refrain from mutual reprobation and criticism regarding this issue in international forums, including at the United Nations in the future.

Regarding the above-mentioned budgetary measure, the expected amount will be around 1 billion Yen. What I have stated is the outcome of consultations held under the instruction of the leaders of both countries, and I am confident that Japan-Korea relations will thereby enter a new era.

Minister Yun:

Now, I would like to state the position of the Government of the Republic of Korea on today’s agreement.

The issue of “comfort women” has been intensively discussed so far between Korea and Japan, including through the Director-General level meetings. Based on those outcomes, the Government of Korea states the following.

The Government of the Republic of Korea takes note of the statement

by the Government of Japan and the measures leading up to the statement, and, along with the Government of Japan, confirms that through today's statement, this issue will be finally and irreversibly resolved on the condition that the above-mentioned measures stated by the Government of Japan are faithfully implemented. The Government of the Republic of Korea will cooperate in the measures to be taken by the Government of Japan.

The Government of the Republic of Korea is aware of the concern of the Government of Japan over the memorial statue placed in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul with respect to the maintenance of the peacefulness and respectability of its mission, and will make efforts to appropriately address the concern, including through consultations with relevant groups on possible responses.

The Government of the Republic of Korea, along with the Government of Japan, will refrain from mutual reprobation and criticism regarding this issue in international forums, including at the United Nations in the future, on the condition that the measures stated by the Government of Japan are faithfully implemented.

This concludes the position of the Government of the Republic of Korea.

I am very pleased to announce here today that, working together, Minister Kishida and I have finally wound up the long and difficult negotiations on this issue before the end of this year, the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties between Korea and Japan.

I sincerely hope that the measures to follow up on today's agreement will be faithfully implemented and thereby restore the honor and

dignity and heal the psychological wounds of the victims who have had to endure so many years of agony.

It is also my sincere desire that, with the conclusion of the negotiations on the “comfort women” issue, the most challenging and difficult issue over history between Korea and Japan, we will be able to open a new chapter in the Korea-Japan relations in the new year with a new spirit of cooperation.

Thank you. /END/