



December 2005 – Issue 9

This issue of the newsletter presents the New Year's address by Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled (KEPAD)'s President Eun-soo Park. It discusses successful KEPAD's projects in 2005 and the agency's future plans. The Learn More series will be continued in the next issue.

New Year's Address

The year 2005 is drawing to a close and 2006 awaits us. I wish for the health and happiness of all of your loved ones in the new year and hope that it is a blessed year in which all of your endeavors come to fruition.

First, I would like to thank everyone who has supported the agency in 2005. I also offer my encouragement to the agency executives and staff members who have devoted themselves to accomplishing their objectives under difficult circumstances.

The past year has been a truly meaningful year for all of us. After the passage of the employment quota system for people with disabilities (mandatory disability employment policy), it is the first time in 15 years that disability employment rates have exceeded the employment quota both in the government and public sectors. This provided the grounds for conglomerates, who had been indifferent to disability employment, to turn around and initiate measures towards this end.

Officials of 37 conglomerates in Korea, including 13 subsidiaries of the Samsung Group such as Samsung Electronics as well as LG Electronics, and SK, gathered at the agency's headquarter to sign the employment promotion agreement on June 24, 2005. That day will forever remain as an unforgettable occasion.

We did not stop at the status quo. On September 13, 2005, at Seoul Square in front of City Hall, the opening ceremony for the 22nd National Skills Competition for the Disabled was held in heavy rain with the disabled and the non-disabled coming together in unity. This served as an inspirational event that upheld the esteem and dignity of the disabled.

This was also a year in which the agency enhanced its position internationally. During the National Skills Competition for the Disabled, the Korea-China-Japan international symposium of welfare policies for the disabled was held and boosted confidence and anticipation towards playing a leading role in Northeast Asia as well as building the foundation for the launch of initiatives in disability policies in developing countries.

We have also overcome many difficulties and successfully held the 8th International Abilympics. Also, in collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO), this served as an opportunity to introduce our disability policies and provide training.

However, we should not settle for this outcome. Based on the firm foundation we have built during the past year, we must now work towards further developing a more beautiful and hopeful future.

According to a recent survey by a newspaper serving the disabled community, the current disability policies and programs have proven to be ineffective in sufficiently addressing the needs of the majority of the

disabled. Compared to advanced countries with similar economic development, there is a lack of investment and support in fields such as basic statistical surveys, basic income guarantees, health care, and education for the disabled.

Under such circumstances, employment is the sole solution for the disabled to break away from the poverty trap and lead their lives as dignified members of society. Therefore, we should take a step further by undertaking a more comprehensive and proactive role in the establishment and implementation of employment.

In addition, management principles based on customer satisfaction, the proliferation of a results-based culture, entrepreneurial creativity, and innovation have all been emerging as inevitable forces in our society.

We must take the initiative for organizational innovation to solidify the agency's dignity and integrity and further advance as a group with the trust and support of both disabled employees and their employers.

We will establish and implement the management strategies for sustainable development. As the number of registered disabled citizens reaches 2 million, we must work towards improving employment to better meet the needs of such diverse people with disabilities and proactively establish and propose more feasible policy options that are responsive to changes in the disability employment environment.

Moreover, we must seek multifaceted measures towards establishing mid- to long-term policies required for people with disabilities' economic participation and basic infrastructural improvements through the procurement of budgetary funds. At the same time, we must pursue the development of new forms of disability employment models suitable to the reality of Korean conglomerates that have risen as world-class corporations.

Secondly, employment of people with severe disabilities is another issue for which our agency must seek solutions. We will be developing specialized employment programs centered on the people with severe disabilities and devote efforts towards expanding their employment by supplying engineered aid devices and support work-at-home programs. We must also join efforts towards creating the legislative and policy foundations needed for the expansion of the people with severe disabilities' employment, such as the Work Supporter Program.

The agency will be giving its utmost effort towards developing policies and business models that can innovatively improve employment possibilities of people with severe disabilities. The government and private sector's support will be effectively employed with the goal of providing comprehensive services for rehabilitation, training, and vocational training for people with developmental impairments and mental retardation.

Thirdly, we will strengthen the capacity of the agency in the international arena. We will endeavor to provide support and technological resources for developing the country's people with disabilities by strengthening the ILO project. With the cooperation of the international cooperation agency led by the NTID(National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology), PEN-International, with which a support agreement was established last year, we will be receiving advanced education training techniques for the hearing impaired and develop a training model that meets Korea's needs. We will also prepare for the opportunity to host the International Abilympics in 2011 while developing the infrastructure for international exchange programs such as the establishment of the International Communication Center for people with disabilities.

Finally, we will work to rationalize management based on labor-management trust and harmony for internal organizational operations with efficiency and a competitive edge and set up an innovative management system for new paradigm shifts. We will promote transparency by providing information on organizational operations to customers, hold regular customer service satisfaction surveys, and collect customer suggestions for the consistent implementation of customer satisfaction management.

Honorable business owners!

The disabled have suffered from discrimination in various fields such as education, transportation, and social participation. However, rather than just stagnating as income-transfer beneficiaries, the people with disabilities have been expressing their willingness to actively participate in production with integrity and a sense of self-sufficiency. In a new era in which the economy and social sectors develop in harmony, we ask that people with disabilities are given more opportunities to participate in society.

Beloved people with disabilities!

Now is the time for your exemplary work ethic and proactive efforts. You must step forward as the creators of history by demonstrating exemplary performance in cooperation with the community.

Beloved agency executives and staff members!

I am convinced that the disability employment policies will contribute to the integration of our society. The integration and participation of our nation's people with disabilities will heal the chronic structural division and conflict and will serve as a great foundation for the North-South integration after unification.

In the history of our proud people with disabilities' development, we must cohesively unite to prove that disability policies will serve as the most vital factor in healing social conflict and promoting peace.

In closing, in welcoming the year 2006, we look forward to further advancing as "the world's leading disability employment organization that makes the value of human dignity and respect a reality." I once again offer my best wishes to you and your loved ones.

Thank you.

**Eun-soo Park, President,
Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled**

 Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled

homepage: www.kepad.or.kr e-mail: bon3@kepad.or.kr
contact: Hyomin Jung (tel : 82.31.728.7307 / fax : 82.31.728.7037)