Opening Remarks
Young LEE, President of Korea Institute of Child Care and Education

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all and share this beautiful afternoon in Seoul together.

As a host institute, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to country delegates and participants for coming all the way to Korea from all around the world.

There are more than 150 delegates from 35 countries participating in this forum.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education is the first regional high-level policy forum on the topic of ECCE, in Korea.

Upon the request from UNESCO Bangkok Bureau of Education, KICCE agreed to host this regional policy forum as a follow-up of the World Conference in ECCE held in Moscow in 2010. Co-organizers had preparatory meetings in Bangkok and Seoul as well as numerous online communications and consultations to elaborate and concretize the program and logistics.

Great interest on Early Childhood Care and Education in Korea has led to the founding of KICCE and it holds a unique position as the only national research institute specialized in early childhood policy in Korea.

As such collective interest and support have been a ready for KICCE to lead this honorable gathering today, I hope this forum, by functioning as a platform to share and collaborate, will be another ready for our children's and family's happiness and the promotion of equity in Asia-Pacific region.

On the following week, we have Hangawi, the full moon day of August of the lunar calendar in Korea. Hangawi has its roots in long standing tradition to celebrate and share rich harvest of the year, enjoy the day full of bright moonlight, and bless our neighbors with health and happiness. In the same vein with this great holiday, this forum can hopefully be a festive opportunity for countries in Asian Pacific region to help each other, share fully, and celebrate together.

I would like to close my words with beautiful Korean saying,
‘Deodo Malgo, Duldo Malgo, Neul Hangawi Man gatara (더도 말고, 덜도 말고, 늘 한가위만 같아라)’, which means, I wish all our days be always like Hangawi, the day of celebrating and sharing what we have together. I honestly hope that the forum will be most fruitful and all of you have an enjoyable and rewarding stay in Korea.

Thank you very much.