
PRESS RELEASE

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"Responding to Changes in the International Order – Now is the Golden Time"

- **The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) Adopts the Yeouido Declaration**
- **Calls for strengthened efforts toward open regionalism in an era of turbulence**

The Korea National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (KOPEC), co-chaired by President Siwook Lee of the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) and Chul Chung, CRO (Chief Research Officer) of the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) and President of the Korea Economic Research Institute (KERI), held the **32nd General Meeting and Standing Committee Meeting of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC)** at the FKI Conference Center in Yeouido from August 12 (Tuesday) to 13 (Wednesday), in conjunction with Korea's assumption of the APEC chairmanship in 2025.

The PECC is a representative international economic cooperation body in the Asia-Pacific region, bringing together government, business, and academia. It serves as both a think tank providing key policy ideas to APEC and as an official observer. KOPEC, established in 1981 as the Korean committee of PECC, is jointly chaired by Siwook Lee, President of KIEP, and Chul Chung, CRO (Chief Research Officer) of the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) and President of the Korea Economic Research Institute (KERI).

At the Standing Committee meeting held on the second day of the event, August 13, PECC's 21 member committees unanimously adopted the **2025 Yeouido Declaration**, warning that "the rules-based open and free trade system faces the gravest challenge since the start of the 21st century." This marks **the first time in 20 years that Korea has led the adoption of such a declaration**, following the Seoul Declaration announced at the 16th PECC General Meeting in Korea in 2005.

[Key Points of the Declaration]

Through the declaration, PECC members emphasized the need to reinvigorate Asia-Pacific cooperation and urged APEC and its member economies to:

1. **Achieve shared prosperity through artificial intelligence (AI):** Develop regional AI strategies, enhance digital literacy, bridge the digital divide, and expand sustainable AI infrastructure investment.
2. **Revitalize the multilateral trading system:** Pursue inclusive trade paradigms, strengthen cooperation in services, and maintain an open trade environment in the face of protectionist pressures.
3. **Accelerate joint action on climate change:** Transition toward low-carbon societies, adopt trade policies contributing to carbon neutrality, and pursue both environmental sustainability and inclusive economic growth.
4. **Jointly address demographic changes:** Prepare strategies for healthy aging, strengthen social safety nets, foster human resource development, and create inclusive and resilient labor markets.

Arjuna Nadarajah, Chair of the Australian PECC Committee and a co-leader of the discussions, stated:

"The prosperity of the Asia-Pacific depends on open, rules-based trade, yet the very foundation of that system is under threat. The Yeouido Declaration is our blueprint to protect and modernize this system for the next generation."

The Declaration specifies that APEC and PECC must take the lead in restoring trust in rules-based trade, ensuring the benefits of innovation are shared by all, and crafting solutions that go beyond individual member economies. It reaffirms **PECC's role as a "tripartite consultative body"** linking government, business, and academia, and pledges to empower future leaders while **enhancing the State of the Region report as a guide for APEC policymaking.**

The 2025 Yeouido Declaration will be reported at the APEC Senior Officials' Meeting in August and the APEC Ministerial Meeting in October, and is expected to contribute to the outcomes of the APEC Leaders' Meeting.

[Attachment]

- 2025 Yeouido Declaration (English original text) — Included in full within the press release.
- 2025 PECC Standing Committee Meeting Photos

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- **About Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)**

The Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) was founded in 1989 as a government-funded economic research institute. It is a leading institute concerning the international economy and its relationship with Korea. KIEP advises the government on all major international economic policy issues and serves as a warehouse of information on Korea's international economic policies. Further, KIEP carries out research by request from outside institutions and organizations on all areas of the Korean and international economies.

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□ **Attachment**

2025 Yeouido Declaration

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) convenes its 32nd General Meeting in Seoul, two decades after the 2005 Seoul Declaration. While PECC has continued its essential work through consistent engagement with APEC, this occasion provides an opportunity to address the evolving challenges facing the world trading system and our Pacific Community and to reaffirm our commitment to open regionalism and multilateral cooperation.

The Asia-Pacific region stands at a crossroads, shaped by rapid technological advancement, profound demographic changes related to both low birth rates and aging populations in some economies and among the youngest populations in others, shifting global trade dynamics, and new imperatives for regional cooperation. These transformations, combined with the most consequential challenges to the rules-based open and liberal trading system in the 21st century, marked by rising economic uncertainty and a resurgence of protectionism, more than ever before calls urgently for renewed dedication to the principles that have long guided PECC's work.

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers the promise of new economic prosperity, yet uneven digital readiness threatens to deepen disparities and fragment global cooperation. The weakening of the multilateral trading system and the rise of protectionism further endanger economic growth and regional cooperation. Meanwhile, demographic shifts pose challenges to education, skills and labor markets and social systems that demand growth-focused structural reform through innovation, new technology and skills development beyond individual economies. Climate change remains a massive threat, challenging not only environmental stability but also economic resilience and inclusive growth.

This Declaration reaffirms our shared responsibility to strengthen multilateralism and adapt our economies for sustained, inclusive growth.

A Call to Action for a Connected, Innovative, and Sustainable Tomorrow

We urge APEC member economies and the broader PECC community to commit to tangible, forward-looking actions that promote open regionalism, economic resilience, inclusive and sustainable development, and gender equality. Together, we need to rebuild trust in rules-based trade, harness the power of innovation, address demographic pressures, and shape a prosperous and sustainable future for the entire Asia-Pacific region.

We call on APEC and its member economies to strategically define the direction of APEC's AI discussion to ensure technologies foster regional growth and shared prosperity, including by: facilitating economic integration, while ensuring common benefits, strengthening stakeholders' capabilities for AI utilization, enhancing literacy, and promoting sustainable AI digital infrastructure investment and digital transformation efforts across economies in line with a shared ethical approach. APEC and PECC should champion digital bridges - shared standards, privacy frameworks, and inclusive access - ensuring digital prosperity is not the privilege of the few, but the foundation of a truly connected Asia-Pacific.

We recommend that APEC and its member economies lead in exploring new trade paradigms that foster balanced, inclusive and sustainable growth amidst weakening multilateralism and rising protectionism. APEC can enhance its role as an 'incubator of ideas' to shape a collaborative, resilient, sustainable and inclusive regional trade environment, emphasizing the critical importance of the services sector as an enabler of economic growth and stability.

We urge APEC and its member economies to recognize that demographic shifts necessitate comprehensive societal structural responses and collective effort beyond individual economies and to develop and implement collaborative strategies and structural reforms for healthy aging, stronger social safety nets, human capital development, and inclusive and robust labor markets.

We call on APEC to make good its commitments to tackle climate change by accelerating collective action and intensifying effort. We urge APEC economies to reaffirm their shared goal of advancing the transition to a low-carbon society in the Asia-Pacific. To this end, we emphasize the need to APEC to ensure that trade policies effectively support climate objectives and carbon-neutrality targets, fostering environmental sustainability alongside inclusive economic growth.

Renewing Our Commitment to Open and Cooperative Regionalism

PECC's unique role as a convenor for multi-stakeholder dialogue is more vital than ever. Many of today's challenges stem from the very success of the region's economic integration, which now demands renewed efforts to overcome resistance to necessary reforms.

The stakes for regional cooperation are higher today than when PECC was first established. Meeting today's challenges will require deeper collaboration and open dialogue rooted in market-oriented policies, inclusive approaches and innovative solutions. Asia-Pacific's best hope remains open regionalism - not as a slogan, but as a living, evolving compact. Only then can the region face the future with confidence.

To that end, as a unique tripartite organization, PECC will expand efforts to empower the next generation of regional leaders through youth engagement and strengthen the relevance of its flagship "State of the Region" report as a guide for APEC and broader regional policymaking.

Through this 2025 Yeouido Declaration and decisive implementation on its calls to action, the PECC community will support APEC member economies to work together to create a more connected, resilient, sustainable and prosperous Asia-Pacific for all.

[Photo 1] 2025 PECC Standing Committee



The Korea National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (KOPEC) hosted the 2025 PECC Standing Committee Meeting on August 13th, 2025 at the FKI Conference Center in Seoul.

[Photo 2] Dr. Siwook Lee, Co-Chair of KOPEC and President of KIEP



[Photo 3] Dr. Chul Chung, Co-Chair of KOPEC and President of KERI



[Photo 4-5] Co-Chairs of PECC



(Left) Dr. Richard Cantor, Co-Chair of PECC | (Right) Ambassador Zhan Yongxin, Co-Chair of PECC

