On 9 November 2018, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the Republic of Korea held the second National Forum on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4—Education 2030, together with the Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS), the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), and the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET).

The Forum is an annual event to raise public interest and understanding about SDG 4, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the UN summit in 2015 as the current global development agenda. SDG 4 is the stand-alone goal on quality education and builds upon the Incheon Declaration adopted at the 2015 World Education Forum, organized by UNESCO and hosted by the Republic of Korea. The objective of SDG 4 is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

This year’s Forum focused on targets 4.3 and 4.4 of SDG 4, concerning equal access to technical/vocational and higher education, and relevant skills for decent work. The theme of the Forum was “Policies and Practices of Quality Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for Sustainable Development”. Approximately 100 participants, representing government institutions, educational organizations, academia and civil society, gathered at the Forum to discuss the future direction of higher education and TVET in the Republic of Korea in line with SDG 4-Education 2030. Participants discussed the role of higher education and TVET in cultivating the skills required in the rapidly changing global environment during the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as well as strategies to help industry and education to cope with changes in the future labor market.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Deog-Seong Oh, the president of Chungnam National University, raised issues concerning the creation of social and economic value at educational institutions. In the following session, a variety of topics were discussed, including expansion of the role of higher education institutions, securing financial resources for quality improvement, linking vocational education and vocational training, and overcoming social limitations using ICT. In the last session, policy proposals and action plans were discussed at a roundtable that included government officials, professors, and a college student.

The Forum concluded with agreement on the need to provide quality education programs in new formats and methods to meet diverse social needs, and allow people to develop future competencies. Also emphasized were the importance of reducing the burden of education costs and providing education and training services for socially underprivileged learners.

KNCU, as the focal point for implementation of SDG 4 in the Republic of Korea, has established an ED 2030 Committee with the MOE and nine educational institutes to stimulate national implementation of SDG 4. The committee comprises nine working groups, one group for each of the seven SDG 4 implementation targets, and two more groups for the cross-cutting issues of ICT in Education and Monitoring and Reporting. The committee conducts research, creates national platforms in each relevant field, and hosts forums to gather opinions from various sections of society.
Photos of the Forum

Photo 1: Group photo during the 2nd National Forum on Sustainable Development Goal 4–Education 2030, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in November 2018 ©Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Photo 2: Keynote speech by Dr. Deog-Seong Oh, President of Chungnam National University, during the 2nd National Forum on Sustainable Development Goal 4–Education 2030 ©Korean National Commission for UNESCO
Photo 3: Roundtable session during the 2nd National Forum on Sustainable Development Goal 4—Education 2030 ©Korean National Commission for UNESCO

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