

【Rome was not built in a day】

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

On 28 and 29 August, I attended the 19th Japan-China-South Korea Trilateral Local Government Exchange Conference in Ulsan Metropolitan City, South Korea as the mayor of the previous host local government. At the conference, I expressed my appreciation for the cooperation extended to Okayama City last year and learnt efforts and opinions of the participating cities.

Despite the tough itinerary (departed at around 6 am and returned to Okayama late at night on the following day), these two days were so meaningful that I was privileged to interact with many participants. I would like to share a few episodes which impressed me in particular, not to mention the conference itself.

Firstly, Mr. Lee, Mayor of Dobong-gu (Seoul), came all the way to Ulsan in southern South Korea to meet me. He enthusiastically told me that Dobong District was promoting ESD, art and culture and thus wanted to advance exchanges with Okayama City.

According to the International Affairs Division's staff, who liaises with South Korea, there is a growing demand for such request every year. It was great to realize Okayama was attracting worldwide interest gradually because of constant efforts such as UNESCO World Conference on ESD in 2014.

Secondly, it was about the remarks in the keynote lecture by Mr. Moon Chung-in, President Moon Jae-in's special advisor on unification, diplomacy and security.

Given the fact that North Korea had fired a ballistic missile, for peace and stability in Northeast Asia, Mr. Moon appealed that it was crucial for our three countries to reduce hegemonism and racism. He added that local governments' interactions would be a key to deepen relationships among countries.

Strongly agreeing with his insight and knowing participant cities' efforts through the conference, I made up my mind to embark on encouraging the international exchange further.

Rome was not built in a day; I would like to continue fruitful interactions, just believing that citizens' interactions which we are working on will lead to peace and stability of the world.