

South Korea: KPTU Calls on President Moon Jae-in to Eradicate Structural Evils from Past Administrations and Carry Out Democratic Reform of the Public Sector

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- The new government should begin with implementation of a 10-thousand-won minimum wage, repealing the public sector performance-related pay policy and regularisation of the status of precariously-employed public sector workers
- KPTU will seek dialogue with the new government and continue to fight to expand labour and democratic rights.
- KPTU thanks our members and other voters who supported the efforts of progressive candidates in the presidential election

KPTU congratulates President Moon Jae-in who was voted in as president in an election brought about by the power of the Korean people's candlelight uprising. We truly hope that the President will make good on his election promises to eradicate the structural evils remaining from past administrations and heed the voices of the people calling for a new South Korean society.

The presidential election was filled with the passionate hopes of the Korean people who brought down the scandal-ridden Park Geun-hye administration. It was also filled with the passionate hopes of workers and common people who struggled day in and day out over the last four years to stop the destruction of basic rights and democracy. The last two years were marked by continues protests - the KCTU's general strike and the mass people's mobilisation in 2015 and the largest ever joint public sector strike in 2016, leading into the candlelight uprising.

Public sector workers have fought against the Park Geun-hye government's attacks on trade unions and public services. We have fought to stop regressive labour reforms, the implementation of performance-related pay and termination in the public sector and the privatisation of the railway, energy and healthcare. We have demanded the expansion of public sector jobs for young people and public sector reform that will truly benefit the people. During his candidacy, President Moon Jae-in promised to accept workers' demands and correct the misdirected policies of the previous government. We call on him to stay true to these promises.

As its first labour policy, the new government should greatly increase the minimum wage with the goal of reaching 10-thousand-won hourly rate, regularise the employment status of precariously-employed public sector workers and expand public sector jobs. These are steps that the administration can take quickly. In addition, the government should engage in dialogue with the KCTU and other trade unions. In particular, it should open labour-government negotiations (consultation) with public sector unions as the 'real employer' of public sector workers. As long as the new administration is sincere, KPTU, the public sector union that fought the hardest against the previous government, is ready for dialogue.

Together with the KCTU, KPTU is preparing for a 'social general strike' in June to win a 10-thousand-won minimum wage, protection of fundamental trade union rights, deep public sector reform, and complete repeal of performance-related pay and termination system in the public sector. While the immediate target of this struggle is to correct the 'structural evils' that have accumulated from previous administrations, the target could change depending on the new administration's attitude and policies. We hope that the Moon administration will, from the outset, listen to the voices of workers.

Furthermore, we recognise the growth of support for progressive parties as the most significant outcome of the presidential election. Shim Sang-jung, the candidate of the Justice Party, gave a great showing, receiving 2 million votes, and Kim Seon-dong of the People's United Party also made a valiant effort despite difficult circumstances. The possibility of advancement for progressive politics was clear in the fact that the support for these two candidates came not only from union members, but also from unorganised precarious workers, young people, women and other socially disadvantaged groups. KPTU expresses our gratitude to the union members and other voters who supported these progressive candidates, who were also the candidates officially endorsed by the KCTU.

The KPTU will not stop its fight to defend the rights and improve the lives of not only our members in the public sector and transport industry, but also of all workers and all people in Korea. President Moon has promised 'respect for workers'. Reform does not come merely through campaign promises, however. It is the organisation and struggle of workers and common people through which the power to actualise those promises will come. From the first day of the new administration, the KPTU goes forward with new resolve to work hand in hand with the whole working class and all people of Korea.

Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (KPTU)

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Director of International and Korean Peninsula Affairs

Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (KPTU)