

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's opening remarks at talks with Foreign Minister of North Korea Ri Yong-ho Moscow, April 10, 2018

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Mr Minister,

Friends,

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to Moscow.

Russia is firmly resolved to develop neighbourly relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In October 2018, we will mark 70 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. Our colleagues are coordinating a programme of celebration events.

Our inter-parliamentary ties are growing stronger, which we appreciate. In April and November 2017, a delegation from the State Duma Group of Friendship with North Korea visited Pyongyang, and in October 2017 Russia hosted Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea Ahn Dong Chun.

The Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation is working energetically. A few weeks ago, in March 2018, the commission convened for its eighth meeting. The agreements reached will help enhance the effectiveness of our practical interaction and the implementation of our joint projects.

We reaffirm our readiness to implement trilateral projects with North Korea and our South Korean partners when they express readiness for such cooperation.

We have developed a close political dialogue. You and I interact regularly, we met on the sidelines of ASEAN events in Manila in August 2017. Our ministries are working consistently to implement the plan of bilateral exchanges approved for 2017-2018.

Russia will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea.

We are grateful to the leadership and people of North Korea for maintaining the graves and memorials to the Soviet soldiers who died defending Korea's independence.

I hope that during our talks today we will have an opportunity to hold in-depth discussions on bilateral issues, as well as regional and international affairs, including the situation on the Korean Peninsula and peace and security in Northeast Asia.

Once again, welcome to Moscow.