

Commissioner Lee Sang-duk visits U.S. for pre-convention inspection; travels to LA and Houston before arriving in Atlanta

Held meetings with compatriots in various locations to hear their concerns, offered words of support for wildfire recovery

Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Sang-duk visited Atlanta, the host city of the 23rd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC), from Feb. 5-7 for a preliminary inspection to ensure the success of the event.

The convention, which is a venue for Korean small and medium-sized enterprises to enter overseas markets and attract investment, will be held from April 17-20 at the Atlanta Gas South Convention Center.

The event is being held in conjunction with the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA (Chairman Lee Kyung-chul) and is expected to attract more than 3,000 Korean and overseas Korean businesspeople and 10,000 general visitors.

Lee checked the preparations of the convention center and accommodation facilities, which is where major programs, such as the opening and closing ceremonies, the 400 booths of export counseling and the economic forum, will be held, and inspected the

shuttle bus service, parking and safety management measures.

He also held a meeting with overseas Korean businesspeople in Atlanta to introduce the OKA's vision for building a global Korean economic zone and encouraged the Korean community to participate in the convention.

'Providing opportunities for domestic companies to enter global market'

"This event will provide domestic companies with opportunities to enter the global market and expand their sales channels amidst the rapidly changing external economic environment, especially with the inauguration of the second Trump administration," Lee said at the meeting. "We will also promote domestic investment from Korean businesses that have a significant economic presence in their respective countries of residence. We will strengthen links between overseas Korean businesses and domestic companies and local governments to also contribute to the revitalization of the domestic economy.

"We need to promote investment in Korea from strongly growing global Korean businesses and expand the links between Korean businesses and domestic SMEs. We need to establish policies in a win-win direction between overseas Koreans and Korea, such as promoting the employment of domestic



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (front row, 3rd from L) takes a commemorative photo after meeting with business leaders on Feb. 5 for the successful hosting of the World Korean Business Convention 2025 in Atlanta, U.S., in April.



OCA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk discusses the current status of wildfire damage and relief efforts with the Korean Association in Los Angeles on Feb. 3.

Korean youth in overseas Korean businesses.”

Ahead of this, on Feb. 3-4, he visited the areas affected by the massive wildfires with the Korean Association of Los Angeles to console the Korean community and discuss ways to support them.

‘We will dispatch overseas staff to LA and other areas’

Lee, who visited the Korean Association of Los Angeles on Feb. 3 to discuss support measures for Korean Americans affected by the wildfires, said, “We will dispatch overseas staff to major areas, including Los Angeles, as soon as possible.”

This year’s budget for the agency is 107.1 billion won, about 400 million won more than last year. Lee plans to efficiently execute the budget to dispatch staff and actively handle the major issues of compatriots in the LA area.

Lee also said the government is “prospectively considering” the issue of lowering the age for multiple citizenship, which the Korean community here has been demanding. However, he said, it is not easy to consult with related organizations, such as the Ministry of Justice, and build a consensus of public opinion.

“The agency is considering directions for lowering the age from the current 65 and is consulting with related organizations, such as the Ministry of Justice,” Lee said. “Related organizations, academia and public opinion are divided for and against, and it is necessary to form a national consensus and make adjustments.”

Regarding the recent deportation of South Koreans who committed felonies under the President Donald Trump administration’s policy of deporting illegal immigrants (undocumented immigrants), he emphasized, “We are receiving reports from the U.S. Embassy and consulates general in each region, and we will continue to seek ways to deal with it with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” On the other hand, he did not speak about South Korean domestic politics,

including the impeachment trial of President Yoon Suk Yeol.

This is Lee’s first trip to the Americas since taking over as the second commissioner of the OKA last year.

“We in Korea are concerned and worried about the damage caused by the LA wildfires,” he said. “Through this visit, the OKA will work closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the necessary support measures.”

‘When situation in LA stabilizes, we will organize meeting with compatriots’

“I wanted to visit Los Angeles, where the largest number of overseas Koreans live, and greet them in a formal manner, but since the situation here is severe, we will discuss how the OKA can be of help, and when the situation in Los Angeles stabilizes, we plan to hold a meeting with the Korean community here,” Lee added.

His visit is part of a site inspection for the 23rd WKBC, which will be held in April at Atlanta’s Gas South Convention Center. Prior to his visit to Atlanta, Lee met with the presidents of the Korean Association of Los Angeles and the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council to understand the damage caused by the recent wildfires.

He also held a meeting in Houston, a city in the south-central region of the country, to listen to the compatriot community’s concerns and explain the key policies of the OKA. 🇺🇸