

Dedicated service for adopted Koreans opens in Gwanghwamun, Seoul

Staff positioned to provide counseling at service center in Gwanghwamun and comprehensive counseling

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk says, 'We will also hold a convention for adopted Koreans in Paris in May and a policy meeting with related organizations'

A dedicated service for Korean adoptees in Korea and abroad to consult on their grievances and difficulties, including finding their birth parents and other family members, opened its doors March 25.

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) has opened a first-of-its-kind dedicated service to quickly handle various requests from adopted Koreans. The service center is located in the OKA's Service Support Center on the second floor of Twin Tree Tower A, 6 Yulgok-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul.

By staffing the center with professional English-speaking counselors, it is expected to help resolve the difficulties of Korean adoptees who have experienced inconvenience in filing complaints due to difficulty in speaking Korean.

When a Korean adoptee visits the counter and applies for a service, the counselor understands the content and connects them to the relevant organizations to share details of the request and expedite the process.

In addition, the service will create convenience for Korean adoptees by providing comprehensive advice on requests, including genetic testing and searching for birth parents run by the police and the National Center for the Rights of the Child (NCRC), requests for disclosure of adoption information, application procedures for public projects by agencies (OKA, NCRC), advice on issuing visas (F-4, H-2), other civil documents (expulsion certificates, family relationship registers) and connections to related organizations.

In addition, the OKA plans to carry out various initiatives to strengthen the link between adopted compatriots and their home countries. The OKA plans to hold an adoptee policy forum in the first half of this year to explore ways to support the stable settlement of overseas adopted compatriots in Korea and will conduct a survey of adopted compatriots currently living in Korea to identify relevant policy needs.

"It is time for the OKA to take care of the 170,000 overseas adopted Koreans around the world who have suffered through the



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (C) cuts the ribbon with Jung Ik-joong, director of the National Center for the Rights of the Child (L), and Kim Sung-mi, secretary-general of the Global Overseas Adoptees' Link.

painful history, which is the flipside of Korea's high economic growth," OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said. "Today's opening of the dedicated service for adopted Koreans is a small step, but I hope it will serve as an opportunity to bring overseas adopted Koreans closer to their home country. When adoptees come to Korea to find their birth parents, they have to go seek support from various organizations and have poor language communication, which has been a major inconvenience. From now on, we will be able to resolve related requests at a one-stop shop."

In particular, Lee promised, "We will hold an overseas adoptee convention in Paris in May in collaboration with the Korean Embassy in France and adoptee organizations to listen to the difficulties of adoptees living abroad and find ways to support them."

In addition to Commissioner Lee, in attendance were NCRC Director Jung Ik-joong, Chief of the Youth Protection Division of the National Police Agency Joo Seung-eun, Global Overseas Adoptees' Link (G.O.A.'L.) Director Kim Jong-woo and G.O.A.'L. Secretary-General Kim Sung-mi, who was adopted by a family in Sweden. [장]