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Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, and UNHCR Sign MOU to Support Refugee Students

- Tripartite MOU signing ceremony held on 15 January at the Government Complex Seoul
- Establishment of a refugee track under the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS)

- On Thursday, 15 January, Vice Minister Jin Soo Lee of the Ministry of Justice, Vice Minister Eun-ok Choi of the Ministry of Education, and Sae-Ryo Kim, Representative of the UNHCR Representation in the Republic of Korea, signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support refugee students at the Government Complex Seoul.
- The Student Refugee Program is an initiative that selects refugees living in refugee camps and other displacement settings who demonstrate strong academic motivation and meet eligibility requirements, and provides them with opportunities for higher education. Similar programs have already been actively implemented in a number of countries, including Germany, Canada, Australia, and Japan, which have been engaging proactively in supporting refugee protection and self-reliance through access to higher education.
- The Government of the Republic of Korea has previously pledged to the international community that it would operate a student refugee program by 2027. Against this backdrop, the

establishment of a refugee track under the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS), as pursued through this MOU, is expected to serve as a concrete step toward implementing Korea's commitments on refugee protection.

- ☐ This MOU was concluded with the aim of strengthening the self-reliance of refugee students by expanding access to higher education, while enabling the Republic of Korea to realize humanitarian values commensurate with its international standing.
- ☐ Under the MOU, the Ministry of Education will establish and operate a refugee track (up to five students) within the international organization track of the Global Korea Scholarship program. Refugee students referred by UNHCR will be selected through a review process involving participating universities and the National Institute for International Education (NIIED). The Ministry of Justice will be responsible for immigration and stay-related procedures for selected students, including the assessment of refugee status recognition.
- ☐ Vice Minister Jin Soo Lee of the Ministry of Justice emphasized, "As the number of foreign residents in Korea reaches three million, it has become increasingly important to create an environment in which migrants, including refugees, can coexist harmoniously with Korean nationals." He added, "We will continue to work closely with relevant ministries and international organizations to ensure that the talents and potential of refugee students contribute to Korea's future competitiveness."

- Vice Minister Eun-ok Choi of the Ministry of Education stated, “Since 1967, the Republic of Korea has operated the Global Korea Scholarship program as a means of contributing to the international community through human resource development via education. In recent years, we have further diversified talent pathways by strengthening cooperation with international organizations.” She noted that, through this MOU, Korea’s participation in supporting refugee students is expected to contribute to strengthening a cooperative model of growing together with the global community.
- Sae-Ryo Kim, Representative of UNHCR in the Republic of Korea, stated, “Supporting refugee students is one of the complementary pathways for refugee protection, and represents a core solution that enables refugees’ self-reliance, capacity-building, and long-term social integration.” She further noted, “This agreement will serve as an exemplary model of cooperation that symbolically strengthens the Republic of Korea’s role in international responsibility-sharing.”

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