1. Activities

• 12.13. The IFES (Director Kwan-Sei Lee) holds 72nd Unification Strategy Forum (webinar) 'Assessment of the Korean Peninsula Situation in 2023 and Outlook for 2024'

- Director Lee Kwan-Sei remarked that the forum is a good venue to comprehensively evaluate the situation on the Korean Peninsula in 2023 and its outlook for 2024, providing expert discussion that can help establish the direction of the government's unification and North Korea policy.

• 12.16. The 4th Samcheong Forum "Reviews on the Roh Tae-Woo Administration's Northern Policy and the Yoon Suk Yeol Administration's North Korea Policy"

  - In his presentation, Chairman Chul Un Park (Korean Peninsula Welfare and unification Foundation) said the Northern Policy of the past Roh Tae Woo government not only sought to improve relations with communist states, the policy also serves as an example of South Korea's independent diplomacy. He further explained that this policy was "a search for peaceful unification through a detour" that reduced the room for relations between China and the US as an alternative that North Korea could choose in negotiations, thereby pushing Pyongyang to pursue an agreement with Seoul. As a result of South Korea's continuous efforts for inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, the 'Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchange and Cooperation between South and North Korea' was signed.

2. Academic Exchange Support Program for North Korean and Unification Studies

• Evaluation of Academic Exchange Support Program for North Korean and Unification Studies in 2023

- Fellowship program: A total of six selected fellows were given the opportunity to participate in existing research and education programs of the IFES, Kyungnam University such as IFES North Korean Nuclear Academy.

- Promoting overseas policy and academic research support projects: Producing high-quality research results through deliberation, revision, and supplementation of interim and final research reports for each task by the six selected institutions, groups, and researchers.

• 12.18. 2023 Academic Exchange Support Program for North Korean and Unification Studies Project Evaluation Meeting

- The year-end evaluation meeting was attended by about 30 people, including Dr. Jae Kyu Park (President, Kyungnam University), Dr. Kim Sun Hyang (Chairperson, Board of Trustees of the University of North Korean Studies), Dr. Moo-Jin Yang (President, University of North Korean Studies), Dr. Kwan-Sei Lee (Director, IFES), Dr. Jeong Jin Park (Vice President, Kyungnam University Seoul Camp), as well as fellowship graduates, faculty members, and master's and doctoral degree students.

3. 2nd IFES North Korean Nuclear Academy

• 12.7. 2nd IFES North Korean Nuclear Academy Graduation Ceremony

- In his remarks at the closing ceremony, Director Kwan-Sei Lee expressed his hope that the academy lectures helped participants to understand and expand their knowledge of the North Korean nuclear issue, and that such interest in working toward its resolution would continue.

4. IFES in the Press

• 12.22. News 1 Interview with Kyungnam University President Jae Kyu Park

- In a year-end interview with local media News 1, former Unification Minister and incumbent Kyungnam University President Jae Kyu Park expressed his thoughts on several topics, including North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's reaction to a possible Donald Trump victory in the upcoming US presidential election in November 2024; the chances of North Korea undertaking talks with the Joe Biden administration in 2024; the trajectory of the North Korea-Russia-China triangular collaboration; the deteriorating inter-Korean relations and Pyongyang's changing strategy toward Seoul; increasing media exposure of the North Korean leader's daughter in relation to the Kim-family power succession process; and recommendations for the South Korean government to strategically promote friendly relations with its neighbors, effectively prevent accidental conflicts in the region, and stably manage the situation on the peninsula, inter alia.