

GWIKS Lecture Series: “Advocacy for South Korea's International Development: Escape from Developmentalism and the Asianization of Nordic Development Aid”

Taekyoon Kim

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Elliott School of International Affairs Room 505
1957 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20052



ABOUT THE TALK

Since 2010, South Korea (hereafter Korea) has been a full-fledged member of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) with which it has made the successful transition from an aid recipient to an aid donor country. Measured by its volume, Korea counts as one of the largest contributors of official development assistance (ODA) among OECD DAC members and has promised to make continuous efforts to improve its ODA policies as to adhere to the OECD DAC standards. Nevertheless, although Korea's ODA in terms of quantity has been on a constant increase and Korea has made continuous efforts to improve its aid effectiveness, Korea's ODA has been criticized for its low quality and policy-decisions have often not translated into actual implementation. Korea's ODA agenda not only suggests a strong economic interest in giving aid, but also contains elements that strongly reflect Korea's own experience as a developmental state. Based upon a historical analysis of Korea's ODA decision-making process and through the lens of the developmental state thesis, this research tries to analyse why Korea has continuously struggled to implement more effective and coherent ODA policies vis-à-vis its ambitious claims. This research will show that Korea's developmentalist mind-set, which originated during its own heydays as a developmental state, is still closely embedded in Korea's ODA policy decision-making process which determines much of Korea's path as an ODA donor. Also it will propose how to overcome the developmentalist trap of Korea's development cooperation not only by adopting the humanitarian way of Nordic donors into the Asian context, but also in comparison with the other two Asian donors - Japan and China.

SPEAKER

Taekyoon Kim is associate professor of international development and former associate dean for international affairs of the Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University. For many years, he served as the secretary general of the Korean Association of International Studies and the Korea Association for International Development and Cooperation, and as a board member of International Political Science Association (RC18). In the public sector, he currently serves as a policy advisor for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and also worked for the UNESCO Bangkok Office, UNDP Seoul Policy Center, ILO, and UN Office for Sustainable Development. In the civic sector, he is the chairperson of international affairs at the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, and advisory member of ODA Watch in Korea. His main academic research areas include international development, global governance and international political sociology. He co-published *The Korean State and Social Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

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