

CURRENT STATUS OF NORTH KOREA

North Korea

As of 2024, the population of North Korea is approximately 25.87 million, and its population density in 2023 was 208.9 people per km², about 40% of South Korea's population density of 514.4 people per km². North Korea borders the East Sea to the east and the West Sea to the west. To the north, it shares borders with China's northeastern region and Russia's Vladivostok along the Yalu River and Tumen River. The easternmost point is Uam-dong in the Sonbong District of Rason Special City; the westernmost point is Maando (Bidanseom Island), Yongcheon County, North Pyongan Province; the southernmost point is Deungam-ri in Kangryong County, South Hwanghae Province; and the northernmost point is Pungseo-ri in Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province. The North Korea-China border is about 1,300 km long, mostly defined by river boundaries along the Yalu and Tumen rivers, except for Mount Paektu and some areas. North Korea shares about 16 km of its border with Russia to the east of Rason Special City, connected by a railway from Rason to Hasan. To the south, North Korea is bordered by the city of Kaesong and Jangpung County in North Hwanghae Province, and the counties of Cheorwon, Pyeonggang, Kimhwa, Changdo, Kumgang, and Goseong in Gangwon Province,

separated from South Korea by the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

At the time of liberation in 1945, the administrative divisions of North Korea consisted of six provinces, nine cities, 89 counties, and 810 towns and townships. However, in December 1952, the administrative structure was reorganized from a four-tier system to a three-tier system. The four-tier system included the top tier (provinces, special cities, and special administrative regions); second tier (counties, cities, autonomous districts, and towns); third tier (administrative cities, non-autonomous districts); and fourth tier (townships, villages). The three-tier system includes the first tier (provinces, special cities, and special administrative regions); the second tier (cities, counties, districts, and wards); and the third tier (towns, neighborhoods, villages, and workers' districts). Several administrative reorganizations have taken place since then, with significant changes including the recent elevation of Rason and Nampo to special cities for economic purposes. As of 2022, North Korea is composed of one directly governed city (Pyongyang), three special cities (Rason, Nampo, Kaesong), and nine provinces.

Administrative Divisions and Physical Geography of North Korea

Administrative Reorganization of North Korea



Administrative Divisions of North Korea

Type	Si, Gun, Section, Gu, District					Eup, Ri, Dong, Workers' District			
	Si	Gun	Section	Gu	District	Eup	Ri	Dong	Workers' District
Pyeongyang	-	2	19	-	-	2	80	294	12
Naseon	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	35	-
Nampo	-	2	5	-	-	2	50	76	9
Kaesong	1	-	2	-	-	-	33	31	-
Pyeongannam-do	5	15	-	-	-	15	302	115	46
Pyeonganbuk-do	3	22	-	-	-	22	422	87	44
Hamgyeongnam-do	3	16	7	-	-	16	425	158	40
Hamgyeongbuk-do	3	12	7	-	-	12	242	140	51
Hwanghaenam-do	1	19	-	-	-	19	417	28	18
Hwanghaebuk-do	2	18	-	-	-	18	329	51	16
Gangwon-do	2	15	-	-	-	15	321	61	10
Jagang-do	3	15	-	-	-	15	205	70	25
Yanggang-do	2	10	-	-	-	10	129	33	43
Total	25	146	42	-	-	146	2,955	1,179	314

Statistics Korea (2023)

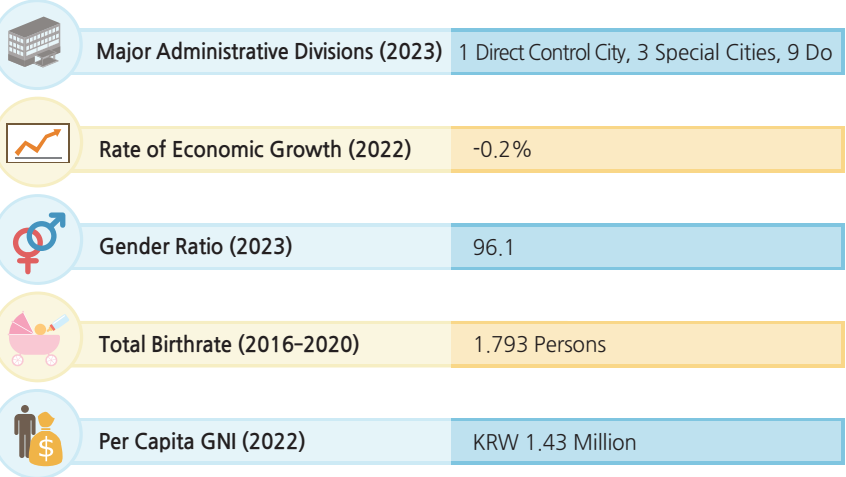
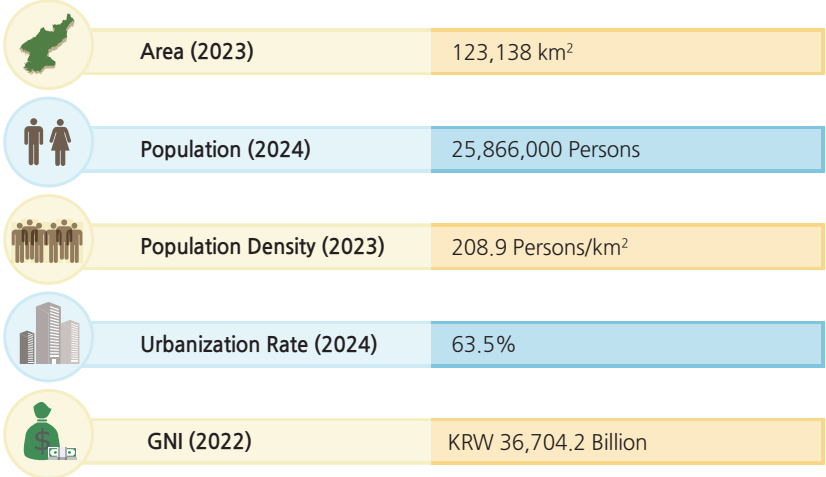
The terrain of North Korea is characterized by high mountains in the north and east and lower elevations in the south and west, forming a general east-to-west topographical gradient. Centered around the Nangnim Mountains that run north to south, there are several other mountain ranges, including the Kangnam, Jiknyeong, and Myohyang ranges to the west, and the Hamgyong Mountains spanning North and South Hamgyong Provinces. The Kaema Plateau is located north of the intersection of the Nangnim and Hamgyong mountains. Major rivers have developed along the direction of these mountain ranges, including the Yalu, Chongchon, and Taedong flowing west to the West Sea, and the Songcheon and Yonghung flowing east to the East Sea. Plains are formed in the lower reaches of each river, with the western plains including the Yongcheon, Jaeryong, Pyongyang, and Yeonbaek, and the eastern plains including the Hamhung and Yeongheung. Due to the east-to-west topographical gradient, rivers flowing to the West Sea, such as the Yalu, Taedong, Chongchon, and Yesong, show characteristics of meandering rivers with gentle slopes once they exit mountainous areas. In contrast, rivers flowing to the East Sea, such as the Tumen and Namdaecheon, maintain the form of straight-

flowing rivers due to their shorter lengths.

North Korea is geologically diverse, with various mineral resources distributed throughout the region due to geological formations ranging from the Precambrian to the Cenozoic Era. It holds significant reserves of eight types of minerals—magnesite, tungsten, molybdenum, graphite, barite, gold, mica, and fluorite—ranking within the top 10 globally. North Korea also has large deposits of iron, silver, lead, zinc, copper, nickel, and cobalt. Generally, among North Korea’s mineral deposits, about 40 types are considered economically valuable.

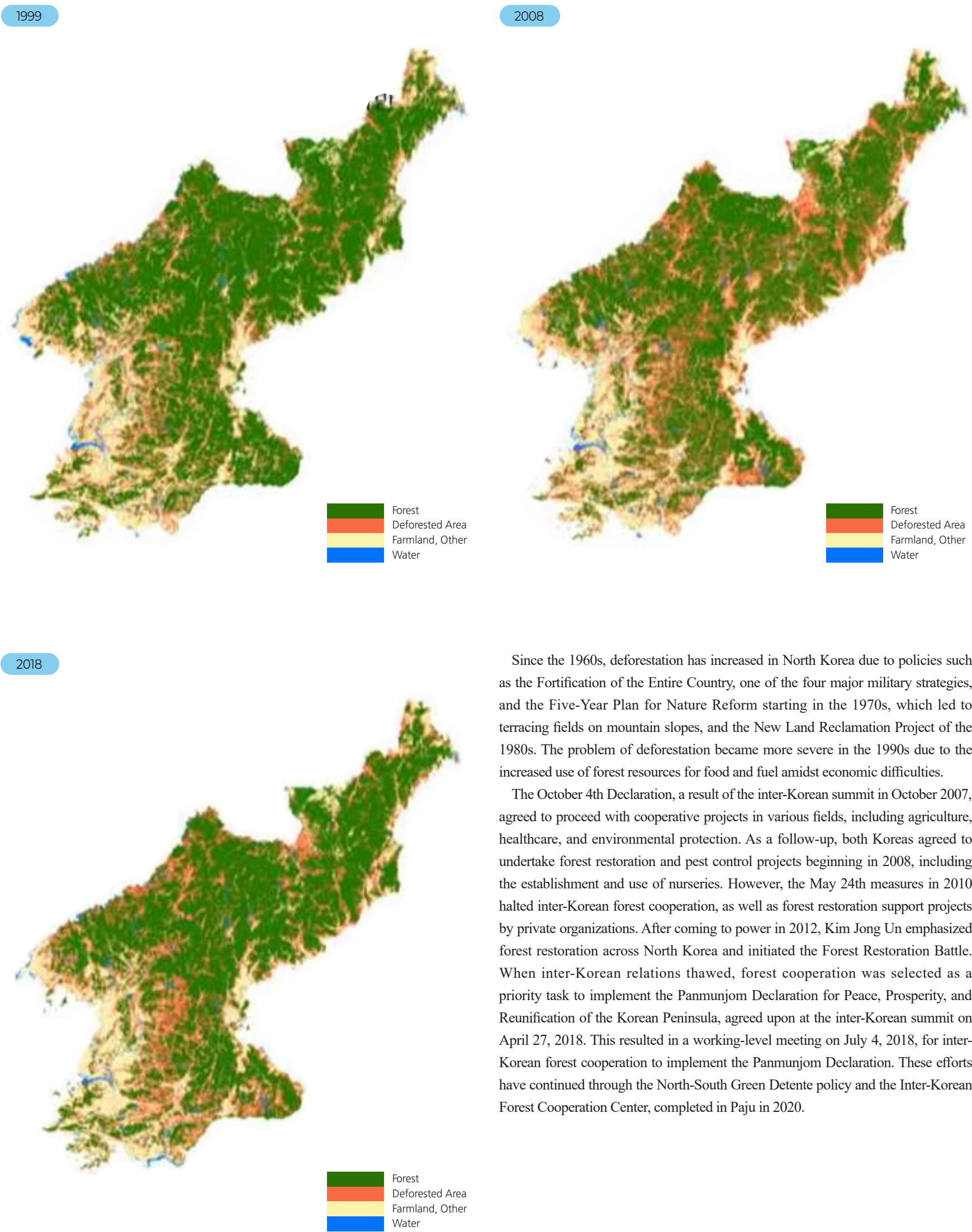
The climate of North Korea is temperate but exhibits continental characteristics. Winters are extremely cold due to the influence of the cold, dry Siberian northwesterly winds, while summers are hot and humid under the influence of the Pacific southeasterly winds. Annual precipitation in North Korea ranges from about 600 to 1,500 mm, with 53–63% of the precipitation occurring intensively from June to August. The region generally receives less precipitation compared to South Korea, and there are significant regional variations in rainfall. North Korea was once rich in natural resources of ecological value.

Overview of North Korea



Statistics Korea (2024)

Map of Forest Conditions in North Korea by Period



Since the 1960s, deforestation has increased in North Korea due to policies such as the Fortification of the Entire Country, one of the four major military strategies, and the Five-Year Plan for Nature Reform starting in the 1970s, which led to terracing fields on mountain slopes, and the New Land Reclamation Project of the 1980s. The problem of deforestation became more severe in the 1990s due to the increased use of forest resources for food and fuel amidst economic difficulties.

The October 4th Declaration, a result of the inter-Korean summit in October 2007, agreed to proceed with cooperative projects in various fields, including agriculture, healthcare, and environmental protection. As a follow-up, both Koreas agreed to undertake forest restoration and pest control projects beginning in 2008, including the establishment and use of nurseries. However, the May 24th measures in 2010 halted inter-Korean forest cooperation, as well as forest restoration support projects by private organizations. After coming to power in 2012, Kim Jong Un emphasized forest restoration across North Korea and initiated the Forest Restoration Battle. When inter-Korean relations thawed, forest cooperation was selected as a priority task to implement the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity, and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, agreed upon at the inter-Korean summit on April 27, 2018. This resulted in a working-level meeting on July 4, 2018, for inter-Korean forest cooperation to implement the Panmunjom Declaration. These efforts have continued through the North-South Green Detente policy and the Inter-Korean Forest Cooperation Center, completed in Paju in 2020.

Population and Urban Structure of North Korea

It is known that North Korea conducted its first population census in 1993, but accurate data on the population size and composition is not available. Moreover, there were significant discrepancies found in the 1993 census data, such as a large omission of men of military conscription age (15–30 years old) and inconsistencies in the data, raising questions about the reliability of North Korea’s population census. Various studies and statistics have been conducted domestically and internationally to estimate North Korea’s population; the summary compiled by the Korea Institute for National Unification in 2020 follows.

Comparison of North Korea’s Population Estimation Results

(Unit: Thousand persons)

Year	North Korea (Official Announcement)	National Statistical Office (1998)	National Statistical Office (1999)	National Statistical Office (2011)	UN Estimate (2019)
1950	9,622	9,746			10,549
1955	9,359	9,113			10,087
1960	10,789	10,789			11,424
1965	12,408	12,252			12,548
1970	14,619	14,002	14,905		14,410
1975	15,986	16,172	16,646		16,275
1980	17,298	18,170	17,622		17,472
1985	18,792	19,995	19,097		18,877
1990	20,960	21,720	20,221		20,293
1995	22,114	23,261	21,543	21,715	21,862
2000	22,963		22,175	22,702	22,929
2005	23,612		22,928	23,561	23,904
2010	24,345		23,455	24,187	24,549
2015	25,030			24,779	25,184
2020				25,368	25,779

United Nations (2024)

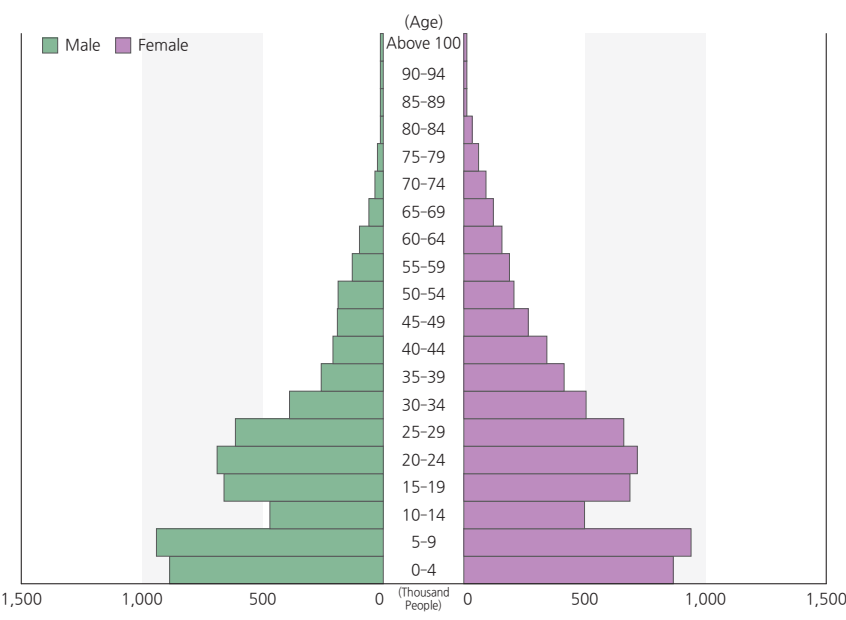
According to the data from the Korea Institute for National Unification, North Korea’s population, which was around 9.6 to 10.5 million after liberation, exceeded 20 million in the 1990s and is predicted to be about 25 million as of 2024. The population of North Korea is estimated to have decreased during the Korean War (1950–1953) and during part of the Arduous March (1994–1998), but overall, the country has shown a steady population growth rate.

The population in North Korea is mainly concentrated in the southwestern region, which has low altitudes and plains. The population density is highest around the Pyongyang Directly Governed City and the South Pyongan Province. The regions of Sinuiju, which borders China and allows land travel, and Kaesong Special City, where the inter-Korean industrial complex was established, also have high population densities. In contrast, the northeastern mountainous regions (Jagang, Ryanggang, North Hamgyong, South Hamgyong, and Kangwon provinces) have generally low population densities. However, due to various factors such as the distribution of plains, the development of ports, and proximity to China, some inland cities and areas along the East Sea have high population densities, notably Hyesan, Chongjin, Hamhung, Kanggye, and Wonsan.

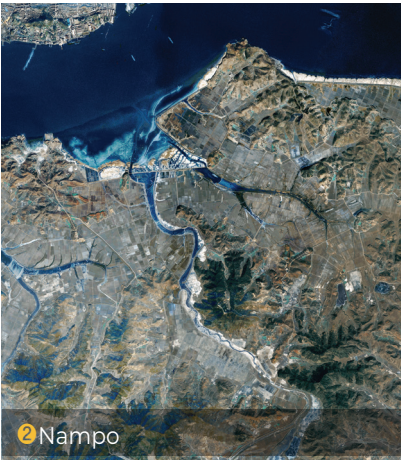
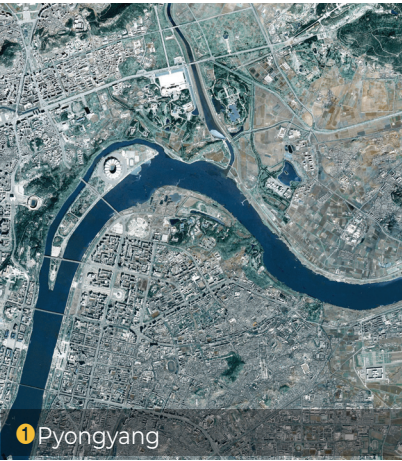
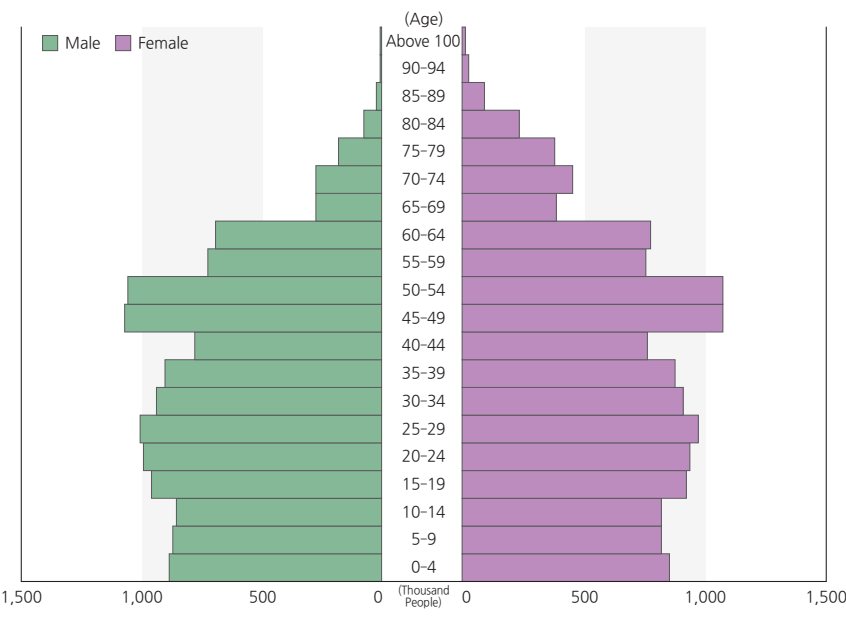
The right to freedom of movement is a universally recognized right internationally, but the movement of the North Korean population is very limited. North Korea is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which includes the guarantee of the universal civil right to freedom of movement, residence, and exit. In September 1998, a new Article 75 was added to the constitution, recognizing “the freedom of residence and travel of citizens.” However, Article 30 of the People’s Security Control Act stipulates that acts violating “travel orders and walking orders” may be controlled by public security agencies, and Article 299, Section 5 of the Administrative Punishment Act specifies penalties for “violating travel orders.” Due to these statutory restrictions, inter-regional population movement in North Korea is not active. As of 2008, among the approximately 21 million North Koreans, only about 746,000, or about 3.4%, changed their residence to another county compared to five years earlier.

If North Korea’s population structure were represented by a population pyramid, it would be as follows: In 1965, North Korea’s population structure showed an abnormally low number of 10–14-year-olds due to a decline in birth rates during the Korean War, and a high number of 0–10-year-olds due to a post-war baby boom. Additionally, there is a low proportion of the elderly population (65 years and older) compared to the working-age population (16–64 years). The 2020 population pyramid shows that the largest age group is 45–60 years old, reflecting the growth of the baby boom generation. The proportion of the working-age population relative to the total population is also high.

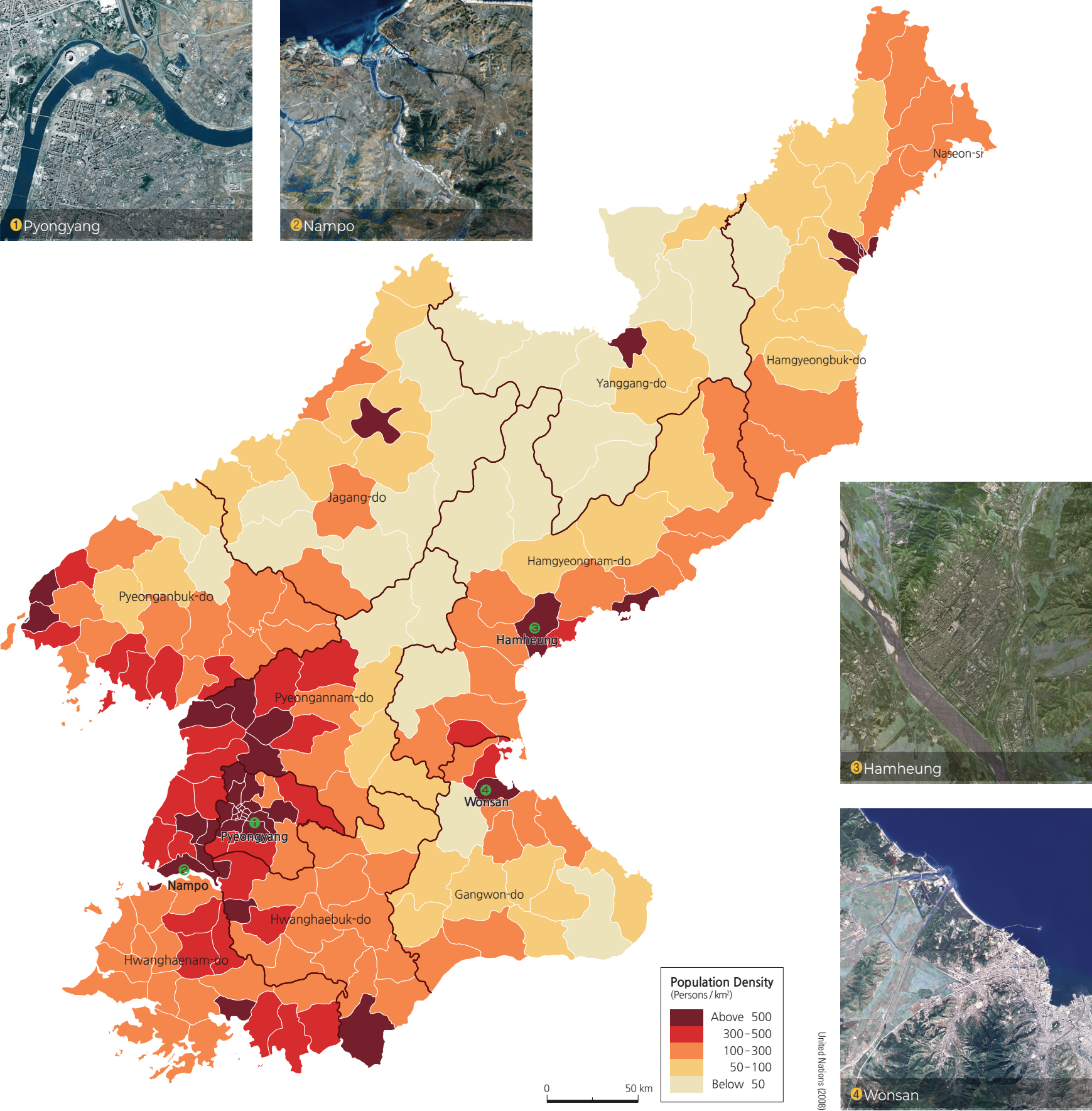
North Korea’s Population Pyramid 1955



2020



Population Density of North Korea



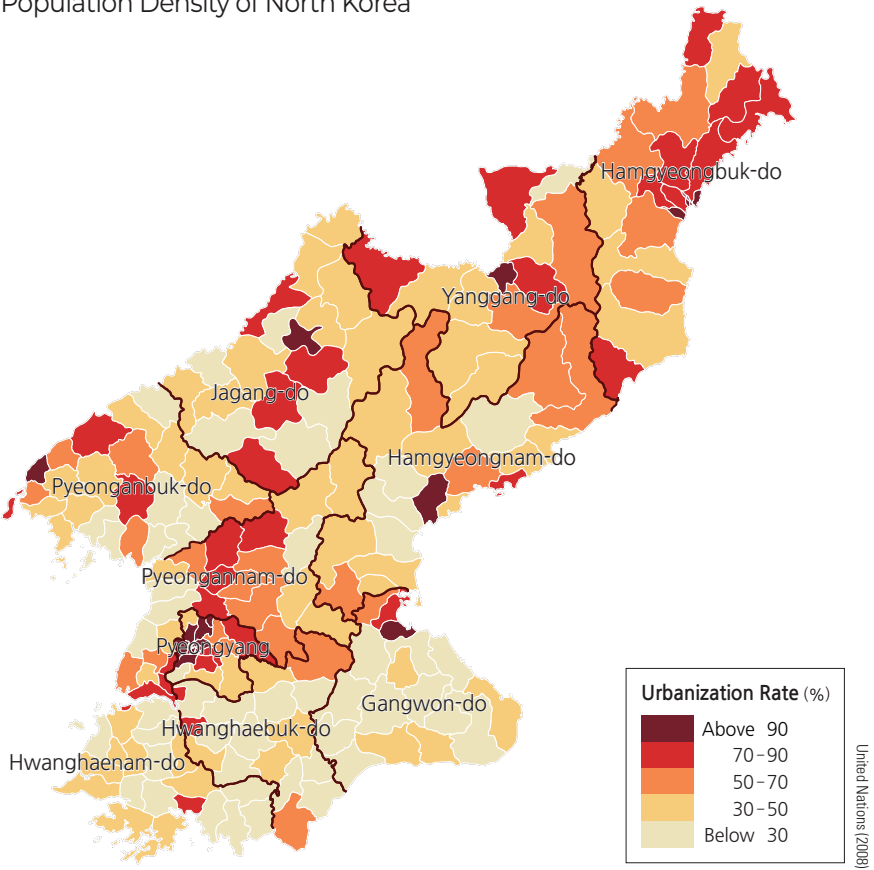
As of 2024, the largest city in North Korea is the capital, Pyongyang, with a population of about 3.18 million, followed by Chongjin (about 650,000), Hamhung (about 530,000), Wonsan (about 360,000), and Sinuiju (about 330,000). Currently, about 16 million people live in North Korean cities, with an urbanization rate of approximately 63.5%. During the same period, South Korea’s urbanization rate is 91.9%, indicating a significant difference in urbanization rates between the two Koreas.

In terms of the urbanization process, the North Korean region experienced rapid urbanization as it pursued industrialization after liberation. The urbanization rate quickly increased from 31% in 1953 to 56.7% in 1976, but the trend of urbanization

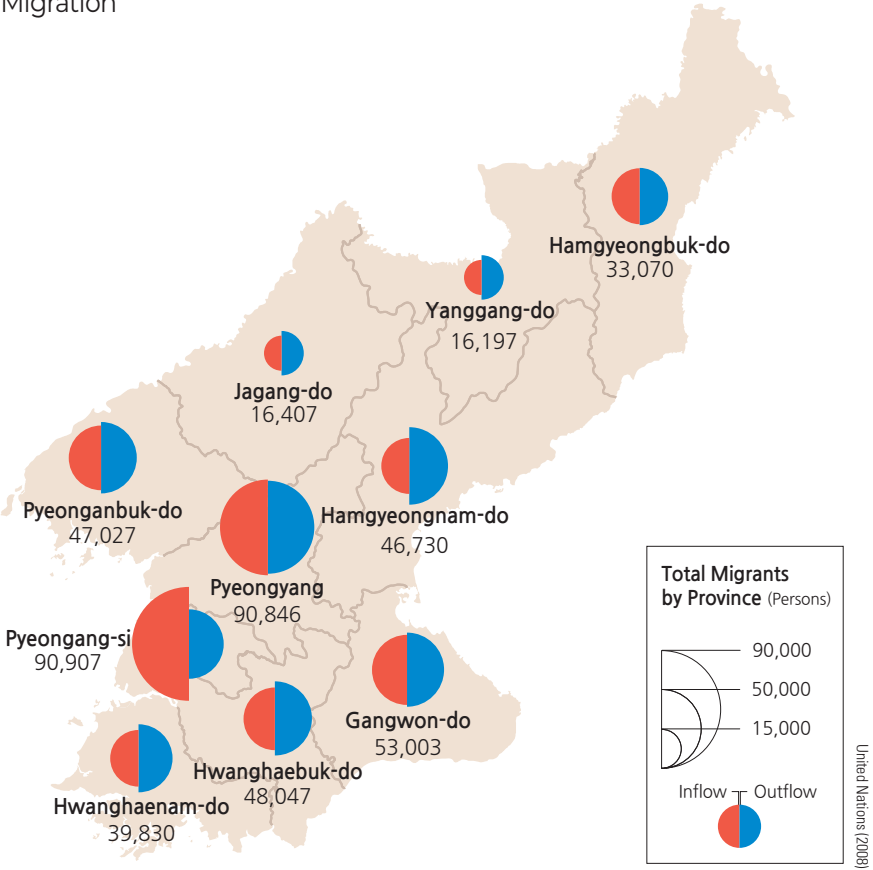
has been very slow since then. However, according to the 2018 UN World Urbanization Prospects, the urbanization rate has again been increasing rapidly since 2018 and is expected to exceed 70% by 2041 and reach 74.2% by 2050.

Examining the changes in North Korea’s city rankings, the order in 1940 was Pyongyang—Chongjin—Wonsan—Hamhung. By 1967, Hamhung’s growth was prominent, changing the order to Pyongyang—Hamhung—Chongjin—Wonsan. In 1982, Chongjin rose again to become the second-largest city, changing the order to Pyongyang—Chongjin—Hamhung—Wonsan. Since the 1990s, Hamhung has again overtaken Chongjin, and with the notable growth of Nampo, the city ranking as of 2008 is Pyongyang—Hamhung—Chongjin—Nampo.

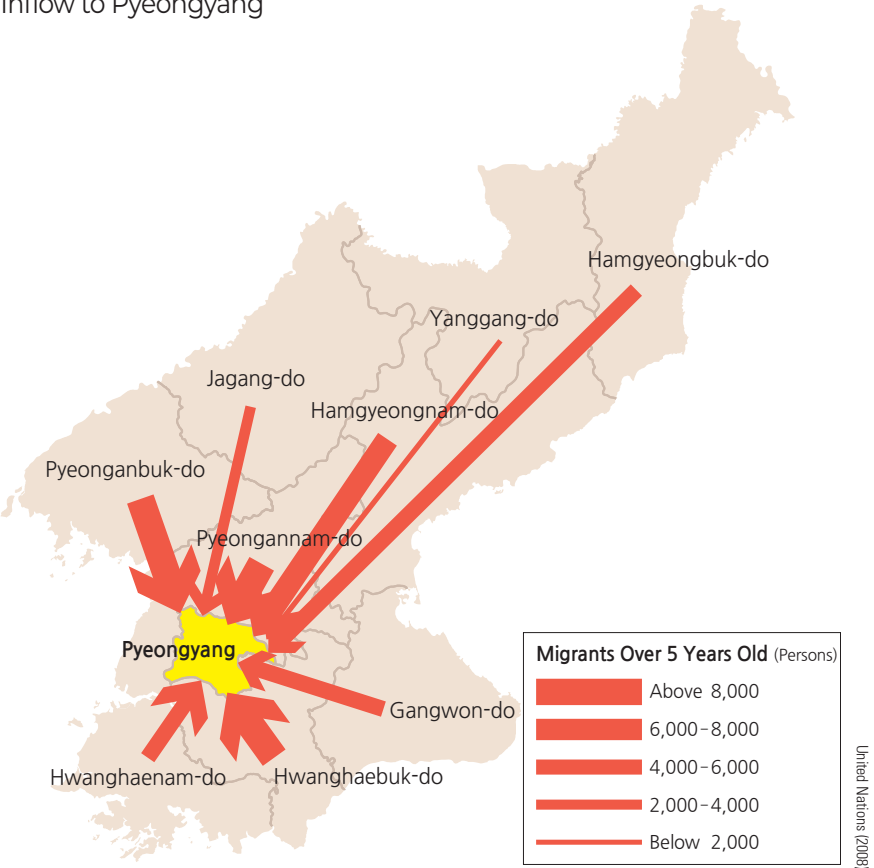
Population Density of North Korea



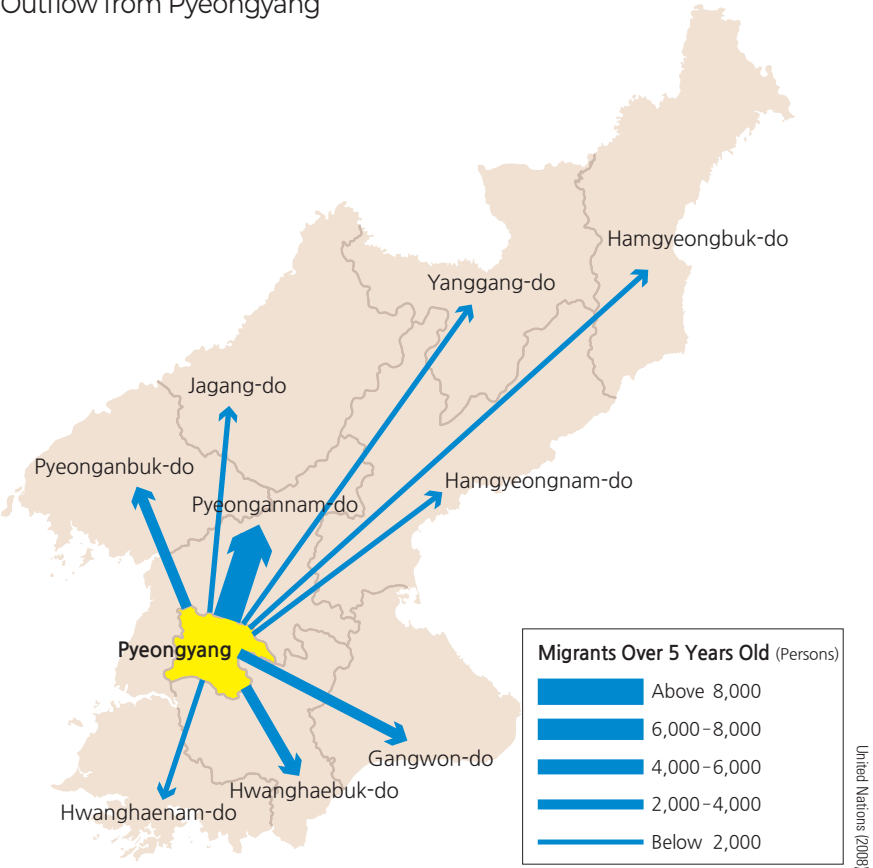
Migration



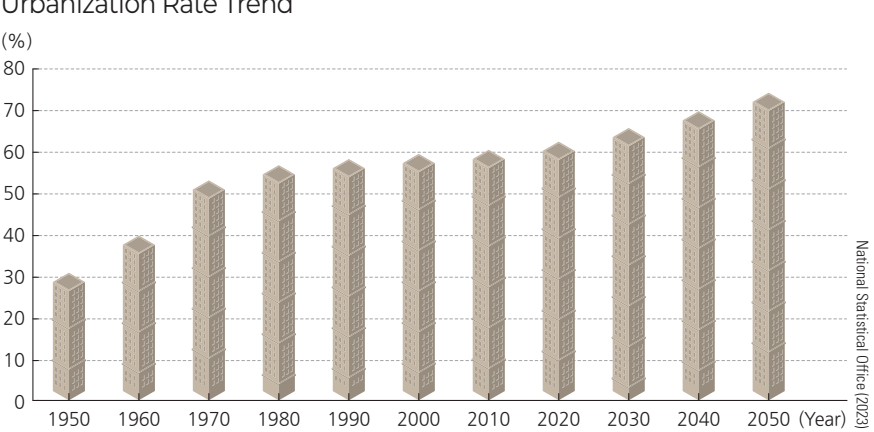
Inflow to Pyeongyang



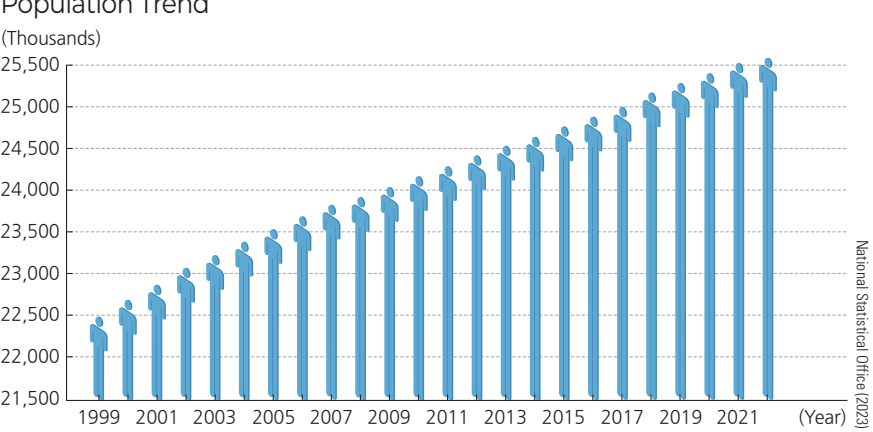
Outflow from Pyeongyang



Urbanization Rate Trend



Population Trend



North Korea's Economy and Industry

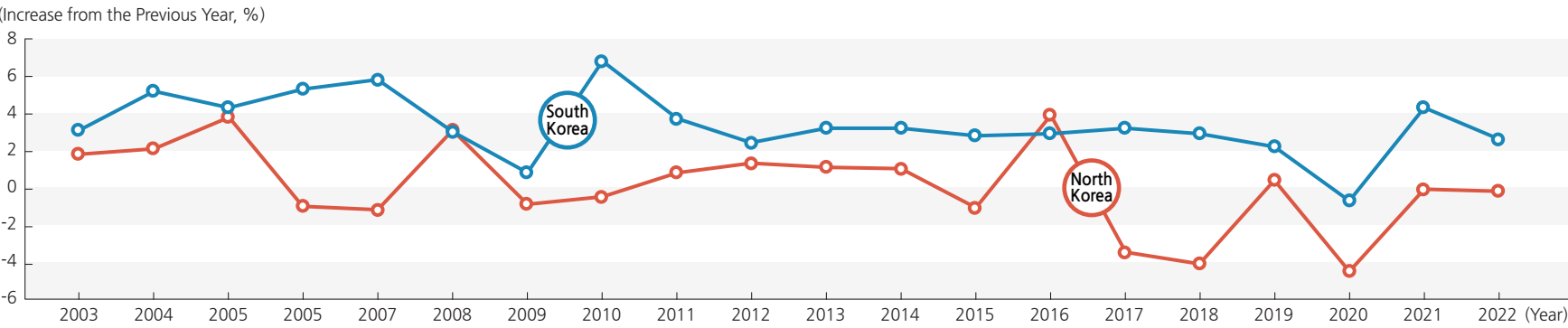
The characteristics of North Korea's economic system can be explained by its socialist ownership system and a centrally planned economy. The socialist ownership system can be understood as a collective ownership of means of production by society, as specified in North Korea's socialist constitution. In 1946, North Korea nationalized key industries such as land, factories, mines, and banks, as well as natural resources like underground resources, forests, and water. During the post-war recovery process after the Korean War (1950–1953), North Korea initiated a collectivization movement, creating cooperatives. The centrally planned economy is a system where information necessary for economic decision-making is centralized with the National Planning Committee, representing the central authority, and plans established by the authorities are handed down to lower organizations, which must absolutely obey the orders. This is also known as a centrally controlled command economy.

North Korea's economic policies have changed names over time, but the fundamental principles have remained consistent. In the 1960s under Kim Il Sung, there were policies such as the Line of Building an Independent National Economy, Simultaneous Development of Heavy Industry and Light Industry and Agriculture, and the Line of Simultaneous Economic and Defense Construction. However, the

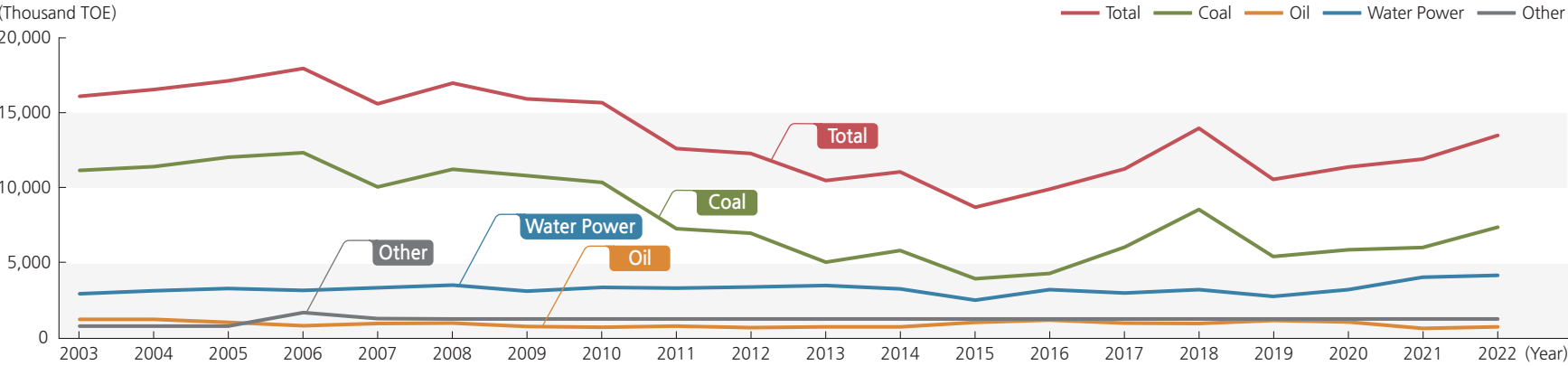
closed economic line, which encompassed the entire process of production and consumption within the country, was not suitable for the era of globalization, where the international division of labor was active. Under Kim Jong Il, the Military-First Economic Construction Line was the main economic policy, aiming for a military-industrial complex structure centered around heavy industry rather than improving the people's actual living standards. This continued even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc in the 1990s and during the economic and food crises known as the Arduous March, leading North Korea's economy to continue experiencing negative growth.

In 1999, North Korea's economy showed signs of recovery but has been stagnant since 2006. Kim Jong Un adopted the Byungjin Line of Simultaneous Economic and Nuclear Power Construction in 2013, but this accelerated industrial imbalance and led to international sanctions against North Korea, adversely affecting its economy. As of 2022, North Korea has recorded an economic growth rate of -0.2% and a per capita gross national income (GNI) of KRW 1.43 million. North Korea's nominal GDP is around KRW 36 trillion, showing a significant difference compared to South Korea's KRW 2,161 trillion.

Economy of North Korea



Supply of Primary Energy



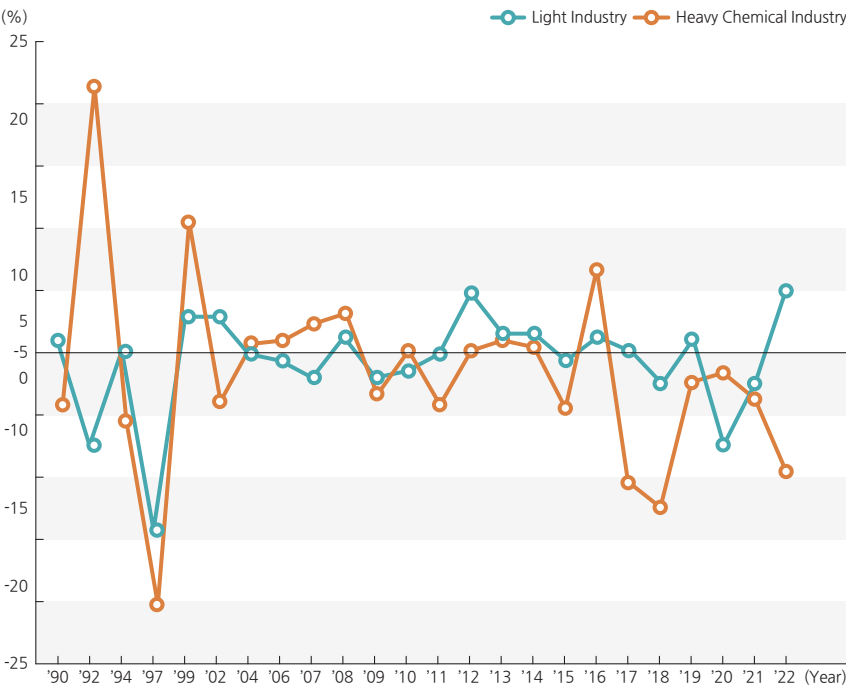
The industrial structure in 2022 consists of 23.1% agriculture, forestry, and fishing; 30.5% mining and manufacturing; 2.2% electricity, gas, and water supply; 10.8% construction; and 33.4% services. Among these, light and heavy chemical industries have shown continuous negative growth rates since 2017, indicating the failure of North Korea's industrial-focused economic growth policy and overall economic policy. Regionally, in Hwanghae-nam and Hwanghae-buk provinces, which are major granaries in North Korea, the percentage of the population engaged in primary industries is the highest at 58.1% and 45.6%, respectively. Pyeongannam-do has the highest percentage of secondary industry workers at 44.3%, due to the region's rich coal reserves in the Pyeongannam southern and northern coalfields and major industrial facilities such as the Chollima Steel Complex, Daian Heavy Machinery Complex, and Nampo Refinery. The growth of the service industry in North Korea is generally slow, with relatively low proportions nationwide except in the Pyeongyang Directly Governed City.

Under the policy of self-reliance, North Korea heavily relies on coal and

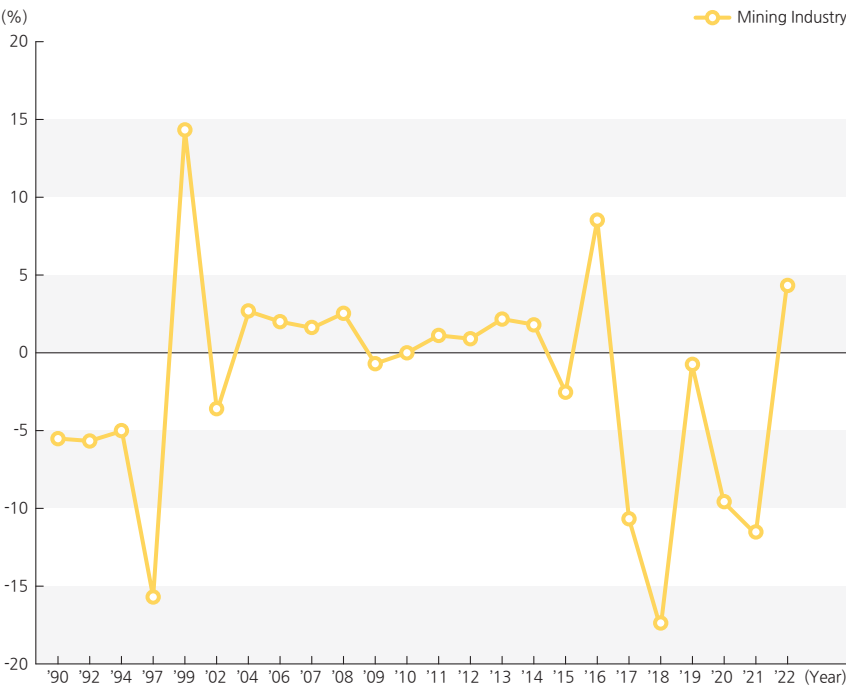
hydroelectric power for energy supply. In 2003, the share of primary energy supply by resource was 69.3% coal, 18.2% hydroelectric power, 7.6% oil, and 4.9% other, but as of 2022, the share has changed to 54.6% coal, 30.8% hydroelectric power, 5.3% oil, and 9.3% other, showing a decrease in coal's share and an increase in hydroelectric power. The proportion of oil in the energy supply fluctuated significantly by year due to North Korea's unique reliance on imports for oil and its susceptibility to external factors such as international sanctions and North Korea-China relations. North Korea's food crop production has shown some annual variation but increased slightly from 4.31 million tons in 2004 to 4.82 million tons in 2023. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that North Korea requires a total of 6.59 million tons of grain, but current food production does not meet this demand, and the shortfall is partially offset by imports from China or international aid. However, if North Korea maintains its current food production and the international community's sanctions remain in place, North Korea's food supply is expected to be unstable in the future.

Industrial Growth Rate Trends

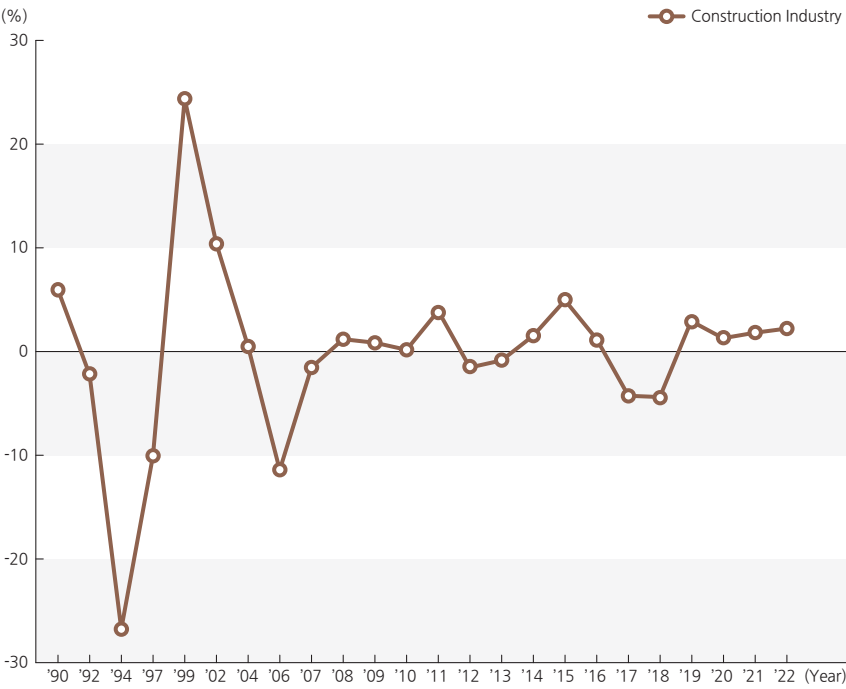
Light Industry & Heavy Chemical Industry



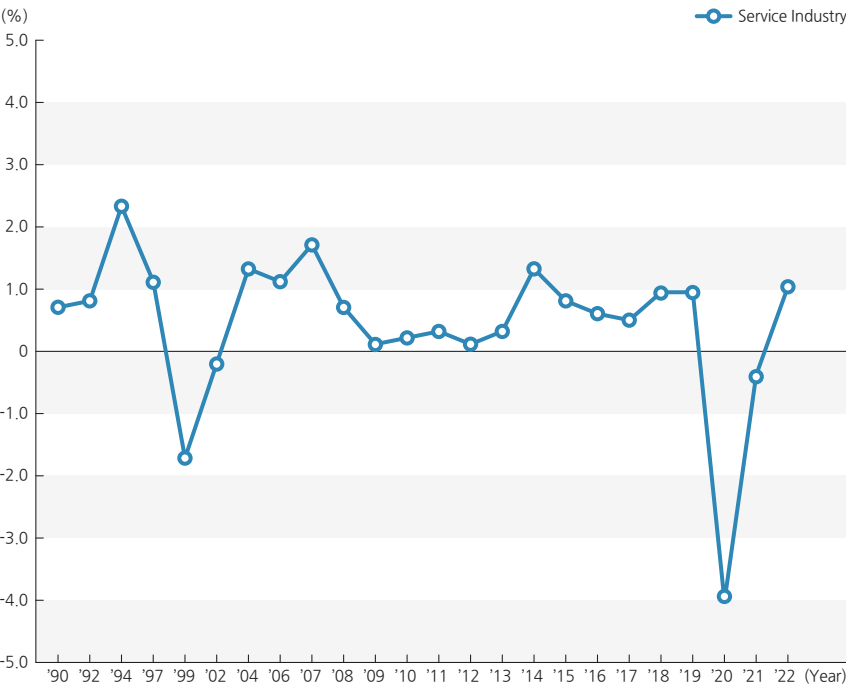
Mining Industry



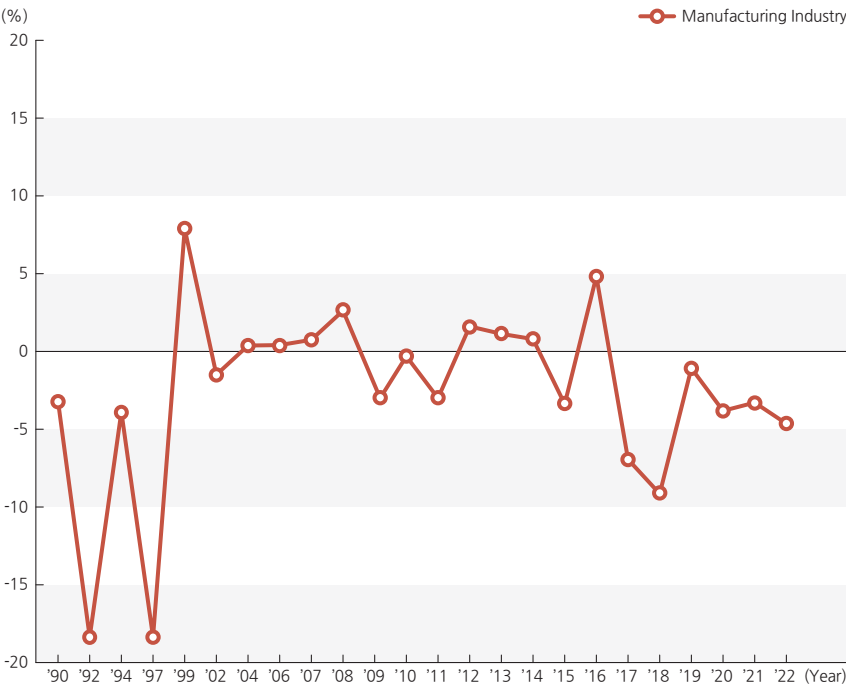
Construction Industry



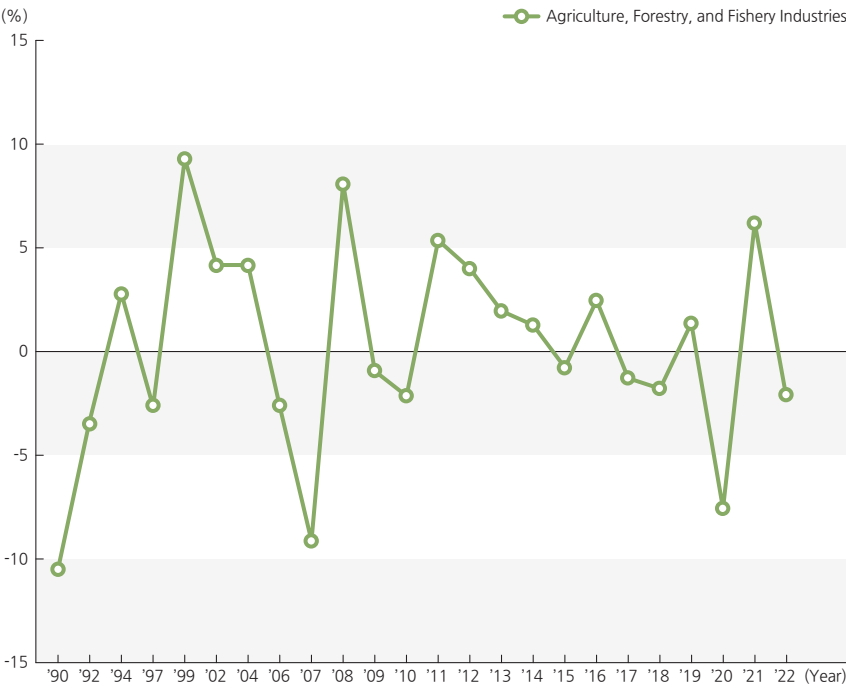
Service Industry



Manufacturing Industry



Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery Industries



Special Economic Zones



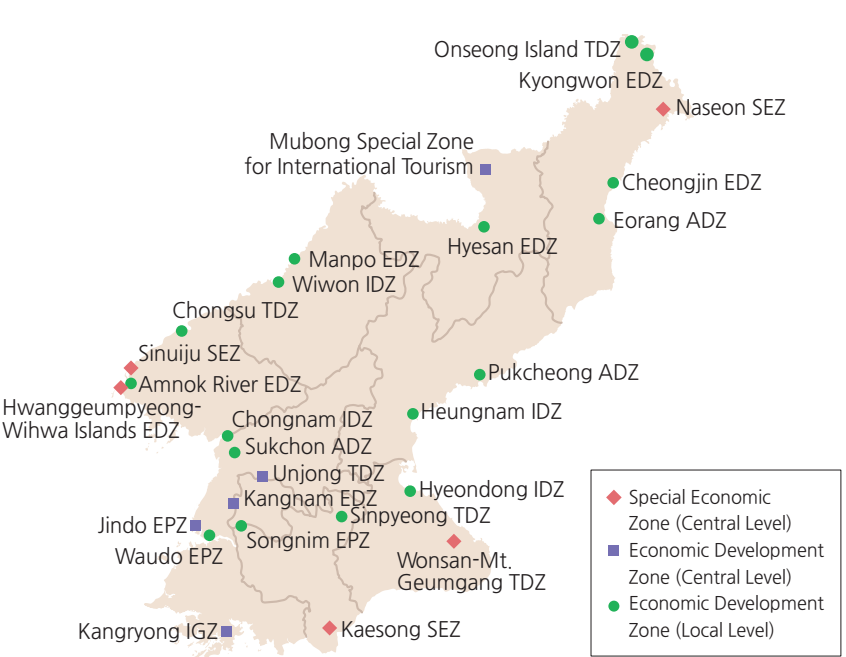
Special Economic Zone during the Kim Il Sung Era

- First introduced the Special Economic Zone Policy (Decision No. 74) on December 28, 1991
- Developed free economic trade zone complexes incorporating cargo brokerage, export processing, tourism, and finance services in Northeast Asia
- Designated 14 -dongs/-ris in Rajin-si and 10 -ris in Seonbong-gun, Hamgyongbuk-do as free economic trade zones, and Najin Port, Seonbong Port, and Cheongjin Port as free trade ports
- Enacted the "Free Economic and Trade Zone Act" (January 31, 1993)



Special Economic Zone during the Kim Jong Il Era

- Institutionalized the inter-Korean economic cooperation; developed and managed the joint special zones with South Korea (in the early 2000s)
- Promoted North Korea-China relations; promoted joint development and management of the Hwangguempeyeong-Wihwado Economic Zone and the Rason Economic Zone (late 2000s)
- Enacted the "Basic Law of the Sinuiju Special Administrative Region" (September 2002), "Gaeseong Industrial Complex Act" and "Geumgangsan Tourism Zone Act" (November 2002), and "Hwangguempeyeong-Wihwado Economic Zone Act" and comprehensive revision of "Rason Economic and Trade Zone Act" (December 2011)



Special Economic Zone during the Kim Jong Un Era

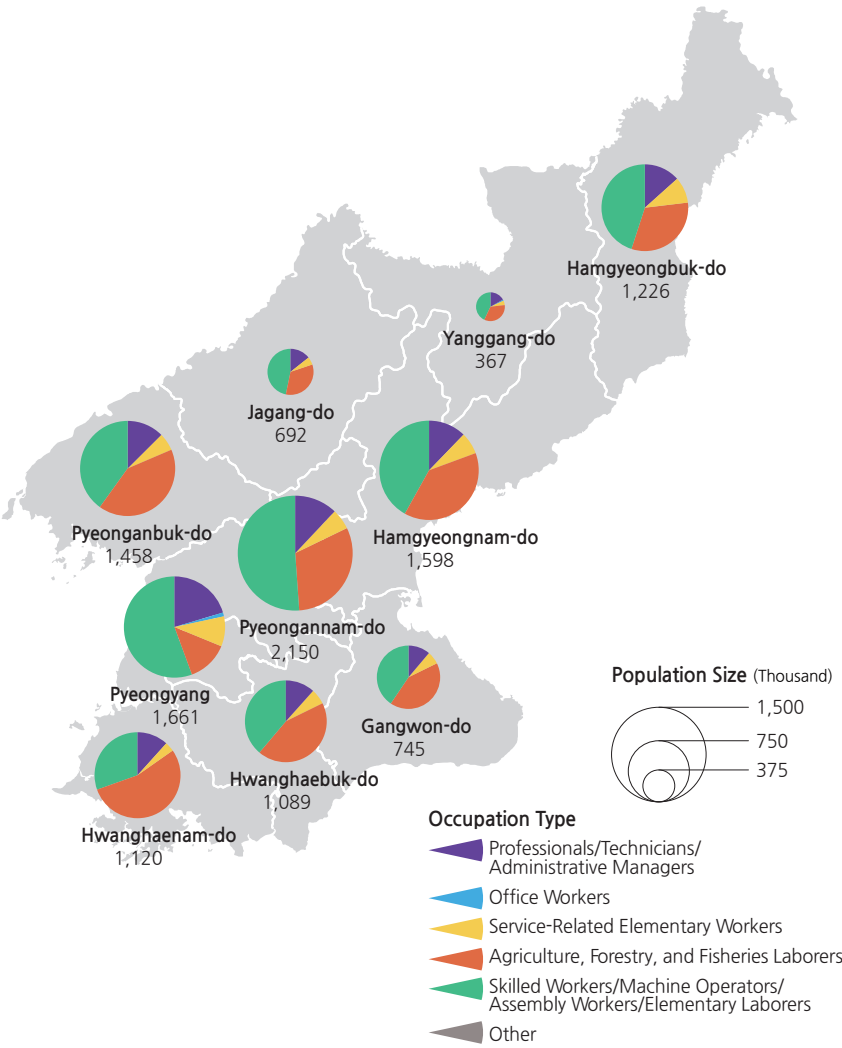
- Kim Jong Un declared, "Each province should establish an economic development zone that fits its circumstances and develop it in a distinctive way" (March 2013).
- The "Law on Economic Development Zones" was enacted (May 2013).
- Economic Development Zones were divided into central and local levels, and diversified and specialized into industrial development zones, agricultural development zones, and tourism development zones.
- Thirteen Economic Development Zones were established (November 2013); six Economic Development Zones were announced (July 2014); the Mubong International Tourism Special Zone and the Gyeongwon Economic Development Zone were declared (2015); the Gangnam Economic Development Zone was declared (2017).

North Korea has implemented limited foreign trade based on the Line of Building an Independent National Economy. According to this line, North Korea approached foreign economic relations only as a supplement, importing essential raw materials to a minimum, mainly through trade with former socialist bloc countries. However, feeling the limitations of this trade, North Korea began efforts to improve foreign economic relations in the 1970s.

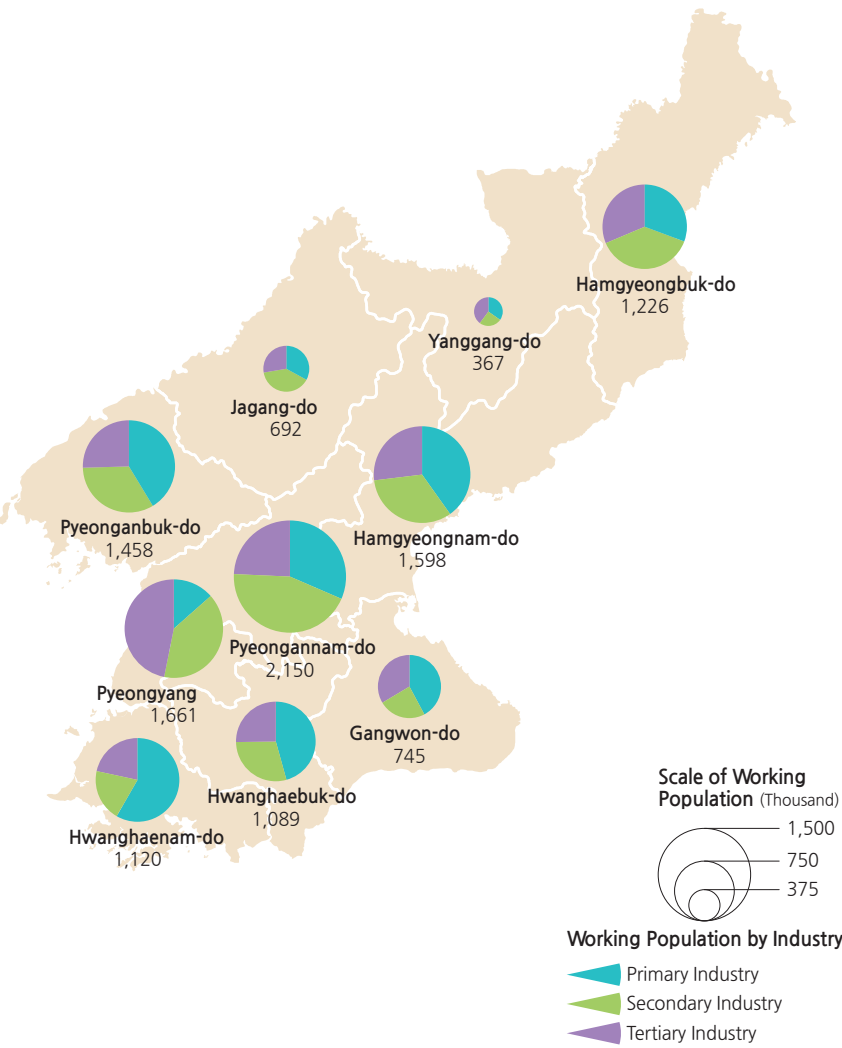
In 1991, North Korea proclaimed the Rajin-Sonbong area as a Free Economic and Trade Zone for the first time and enacted laws related to foreign investment, actively working to attract foreign capital. Subsequently, under Kim Jong Il, the Sinuiju Administrative Region was established in September 2002, the Kaesong Industrial Complex in October, and the Mount Kumgang Tourist Zone in November. However, as inter-Korean relations deteriorated after the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan in 2010, inter-Korean cooperation projects such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex and Mount Kumgang Tourist Zone were scaled back, leading North Korea to expand its opening to China. As part of this, the Rajin-Sonbong Economic Zone was upgraded to a Special City in January 2010, and in June 2011, North Korea and China jointly declared the development and management of the Hwangguempeyeong and Wihwa Islands Economic Zone.

The special economic zone policy has been further intensified under Kim Jong Un's regime and expanded to the entire country. In May 2013, the Economic Development Zone Law was enacted, and 13 economic development zones were established in each province, aiming to attract foreign investment and develop the economy. Sinuiju was also selected as a new special zone. In addition, in July 2014, six more development zones, including the Unjong High-Tech Development Zone, were designated, followed by the Mubong International Tourism Zone in April 2015, the Gyeongwon Economic Development Zone in October 2015, and the Gangnam Economic Development Zone in December 2017. The economic development zones are being developed with specialization in fields such as industry, agriculture, tourism, export processing, and high technology, along with central and local-level development zones, and a total of 27 special economic zones have been designated, including existing special economic zones.

Working Population by Occupation



Working Population by Major Industry Group



The General Markets of North Korea



Despite these efforts, international sanctions against North Korea have been strengthened, and internal issues such as poor infrastructure and outdated logistics systems, along with failures like the suspension of the Kaesong Industrial Complex, have hampered the promotion of North Korea’s economic development zones. Despite various policy attempts, North Korea’s trade volume has remained between a minimum of USD 700 million and a maximum of USD 7.6 billion from 2003 to 2022, which is significantly lower than South Korea’s trade volume, which grew from USD 372 billion to USD 1.4 trillion during the same period.

As previously mentioned, North Korea’s planned economy did not function normally, and smooth supply and distribution were not achieved. After experiencing economic difficulties in the 1990s, a black market called jangmadang emerged, where food and consumer goods were traded. On July 1, 2002, North Korea attempted to introduce some market economy elements into its centralized planned economy by introducing the Economic Management Improvement Measures. Subsequently, in an effort to curb the indiscriminate expansion of marketization, North Korea implemented measures such as crackdowns on commercial activities, closure of comprehensive markets, and currency reform. However, beginning in February 2010, North Korea began to ease control again, allowing market activities.

As of 2022, it is reported that there are 414 comprehensive markets operating throughout North Korea, and a new class of donju (entrepreneurs or money masters) has emerged, accumulating commercial capital. They are expanding their influence, from goods distribution through smuggling as well as official and North Korea-China border trade, to construction and real estate, such as apartment construction and sales.

Do	Pyeongannam-do	Pyeonganbuk-do	Hamgyeongbuk-do	Hamgyeongnam-do	Hwanghaenam-do	Hwanghaebuk-do	Kaesong Special City	Total
Number of General Markets	68	50	48	46	34	33	5	
Do	Pyeongyang	Gangwon-do	Jagang-do	Jagang-do	Nampo Special City	Naseon Special City		414
Number of General Markets	31	30	27	18	21	3		

National Institute for Unification Education (2022)

Inter-Korean Relations and the Korean Peninsula Situation

1988/07/07	1988/11/14	1990/08/01	1990/09/25	
"Special Declaration for Independence of the People, Prosperity and Reunification" is announced.	First approval of imports from North Korea (Daewoo, 519 pieces of porcelain items)	Legislation of "Act on North-South Exchange and Cooperation" and "Act on North-South Cooperation Fund"	Legislation of "Official Notice on the Procedures for Export and Import of Items in Inter-Korean Trade"	
1992/10/05	1994/06/20	1994/11/08	1995/05/17	
First cooperation partner (Daewoo) approved.	Legislation of "Official Notice on the Approval Application of Inter-Korean Transportation Equipment Operations"	Announcement of 1st Measures to Promote Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation; entrepreneurs and technicians for commissioned processing trade are allowed to visit North Korea.	First cooperation project (Daewoo) approved.	
1998/04/30	2000/09/01	2001/12/31	2002/09/18	
Announcement of 2nd Measures to Promote Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation; limits to exporting production facilities for commissioned processing trade and limits to investment in joint projects are lifted.	2nd Ministerial Talks—Agreement on Joint Promotion of Project to Prevent Flooding of the Imjin River	Legislation of "Official Notice on the Approval Standards in Inter-Korean Shipping Operations"	Groundbreaking ceremony for the railway and road connecting the Gyeongui line and the Donghae line.	
2003/08/28	2004/03/05	2004/10/31	2005/06/13	
3rd North-South Economic Cooperation Committee; Agreement on Procedures to Verify Country of Origin for Products Traded between North and South Korea is signed (effective September 29, 2003).	8th North-South Economic Cooperation Committee; Agreement on the Prevention of Flooding of Imjin River is adopted.	The Gyeongui line and the Donghae line roads are completed (open December 1).	Legislation of "Official Notice on the Approval Application and Standards of Inter-Korean Transportation Equipment Operations"—Integration of Existing Official Notices on Transportation Equipment Operations and Shipping Operations	
2005/08/01	2005/08/11	2005/08/18	2006/06/06	
Agreement on North-South Marine Transport and Appendix Agreement for the Implementation of the Agreement on North-South Marine Transport took effect.	Wired Network Connection between Inter-Korean Authorities on Maritime Affairs	1st North-South Agricultural Cooperation Committee	12th North-South Economic Cooperation Committee; Agreement on Inter-Korean Cooperation in Light Industries and Underground Resource Development is adopted.	
2007/05/17	2008/12/01	2009/10/14	2013/11/13	
Pilot operation of the inter-Korean railway opens with cargo train operation on December 11, 2007.	North Korea implements "December 1st Measures," including restrictions on road traffic between the two Koreas (lifted on August 20, 2009).	North-South Working-Level Meeting for the Prevention of Flooding of Imjin River; agreement is made on advance notice when river water is discharged.	South Korea and Russia signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to ensure that South Korean companies can participate in the Rajin-Hasan logistics project.	
2014/02/11–13	2014/07/15–22	2014/11/21–28	2014/11/24–28	
First On-Site Inspection on Najin-Hasan Logistics Project (Naseon Area)	Second On-Site Inspection on Najin-Hasan Logistics Project (Naseon Area)	Test-Run coal shipment between Najin and Pohang as part of the Najin-Hasan Logistics Project	First Test-Run Shipment as part of the Najin-Hasan Logistics Project	
2015/04/17–23	2015/08/05	2015/11/18–12/07	2016/01/06	
Second Test-Run Shipment as part of the Najin-Hasan Logistics Project	A Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Restoration Work of the Southern Section of the Gyeongwon Line	Third Test-Run Shipment as part of the Najin-Hasan Logistics Project	North Korea's Fourth Nuclear Test; Adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2270 on March 3, 2016; North Korea's Firing of a Long-Range Rocket on February 6, 2016.	
2016/02/10	2018/08/13–08/20	2018/11/30–12/17	2018/12/26	2020/06/16
Compete Shutdown of Gaeseong Industrial Complex	Two Koreas' Joint Inspection of the Gyeongui Line Road (Pyongyang–Gaeseong)	Two Koreas' Joint Inspection of the Gyeongui Line Road (Gaeseong–Sinuiju) and Donghae Line Railway (Kumgangsán Mountain–Tumengan River)	Groundbreaking ceremony to mark the connection of the Gyeongui Line and Donghae Line Roads and Railways between the two Koreas as well as the modernization of related facilities in North Korea	North Korea's demolition of the Inter-Korean Liaison Office

In August 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on the Empire of Japan and carried out an invasion operation on the Korean Peninsula. To prevent the Soviet occupation of the Korean Peninsula, the United States established a military demarcation line along the 38th parallel. In 1948, the division began with the establishment of separate governments in South and North Korea. On June 25, 1950, the Korean War broke out due to a surprise invasion by North Korea, and after three years of war, an armistice agreement was signed in July 1953.

After the armistice, the Korean Peninsula became a stage where the global Cold War system was spatially manifested, placing inter-Korean relations at the forefront of bloc confrontation. The prolonged Cold War confrontation structure began to dissolve following the collapse of the Soviet and Eastern European socialist systems in the 1990s. The government inaugurated in 1998 promoted the Policy of Reconciliation and Cooperation toward North Korea, which focused on humanitarian aid and economic exchange with North Korea. Also known as the Sunshine Policy, this aimed to alleviate tensions and induce reform and openness in North Korea through direct dialogue, marking a departure from previous hardline policies. The Policy of Reconciliation and Cooperation led to the first inter-Korean summit in June 2000, resulting in the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration,

which outlined a basic agreement for peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

The succeeding administration maintained a similar stance toward North Korea, resulting in the second inter-Korean summit in October 2007. At this summit, the October 4th North-South Joint Declaration was adopted, reaffirming the spirit of the June 15th declaration and including agreements on the development of inter-Korean relations, peace on the Korean Peninsula, and joint prosperity and reunification of the Korean people.

However, during the Lee Myung-bak Administration in 2008, inter-Korean relations rapidly deteriorated. North Korea continued provocations against South Korea, including a second nuclear test and the Battle of Daecheong in 2009, as well as the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan warship and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010, resulting in casualties. This tense situation persisted under the Park Geun-hye Administration, with North Korea conducting its third and fourth nuclear tests, planting landmines in the DMZ, shelling the western front, and firing multiple missiles and rockets. In particular, skepticism about efforts to improve inter-Korean relations grew following the complete shutdown of the Kaesong Industrial Complex, established as part of the Policy of Reconciliation and Cooperation, in 2016.



The June 15 Joint Declaration (2000)



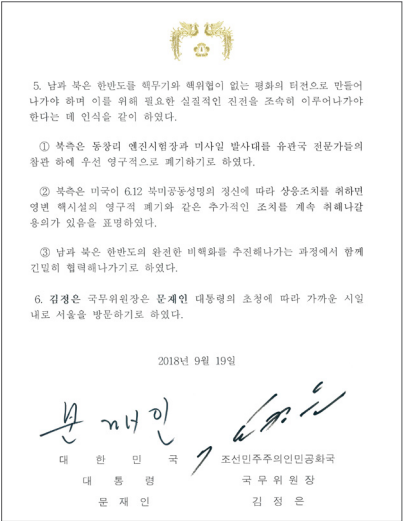
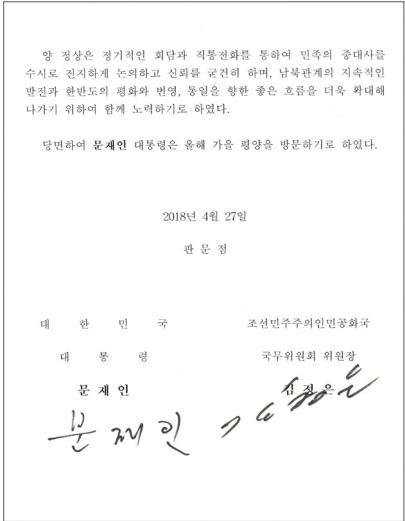
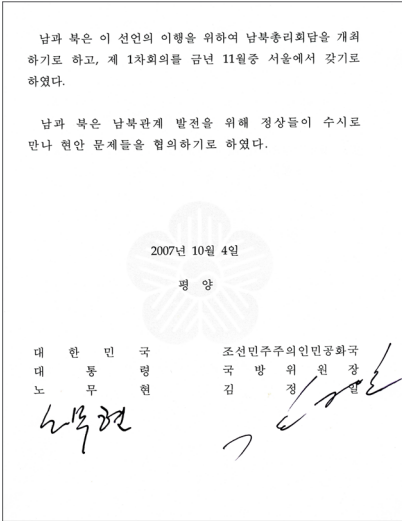
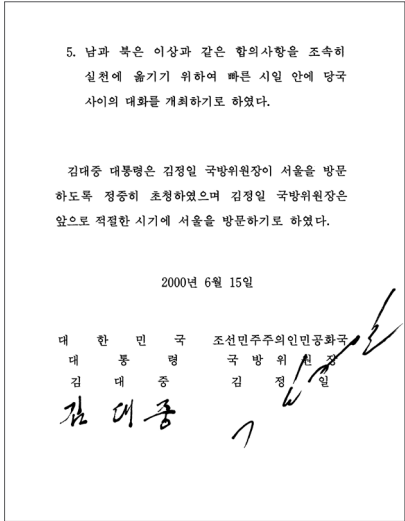
The October 4 Joint Declaration (2007)



The Pyongyang Joint Declaration (2018)



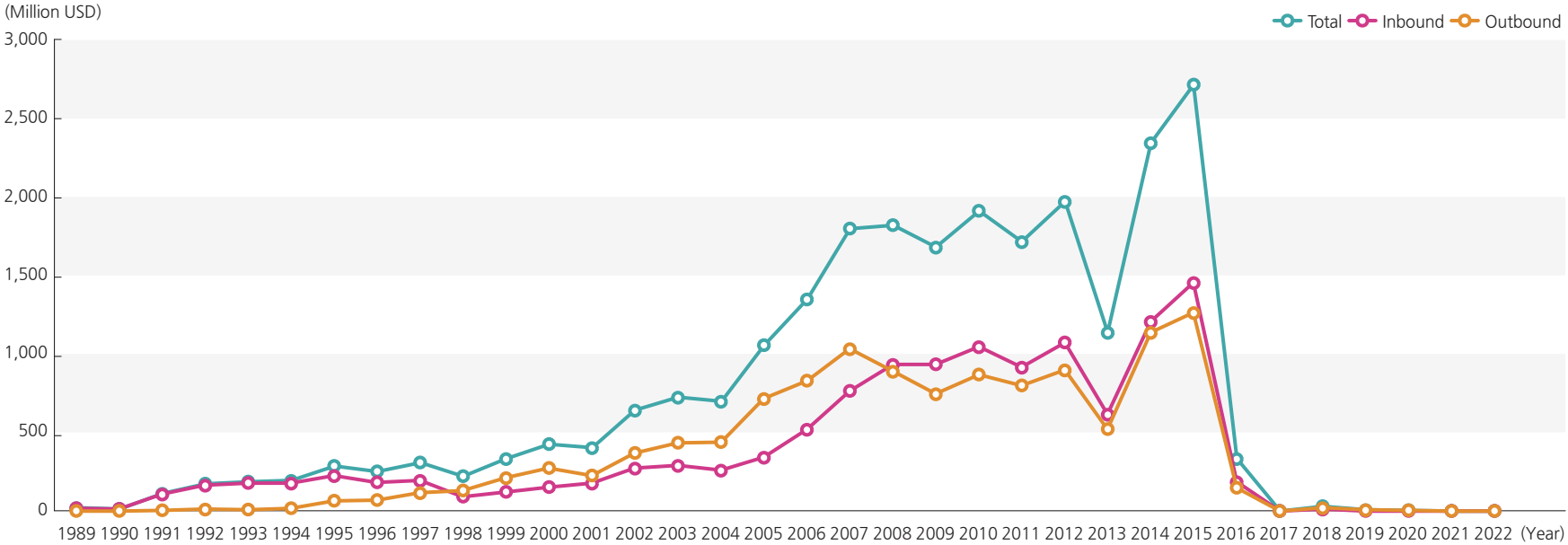
The Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula (2018)



The third inter-Korean summit took place in 2018 amid an atmosphere conducive to peace and dialogue on the Korean Peninsula, created in part by the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. The summit was held three times that year: in April and May at Panmunjom and in September in Pyongyang.

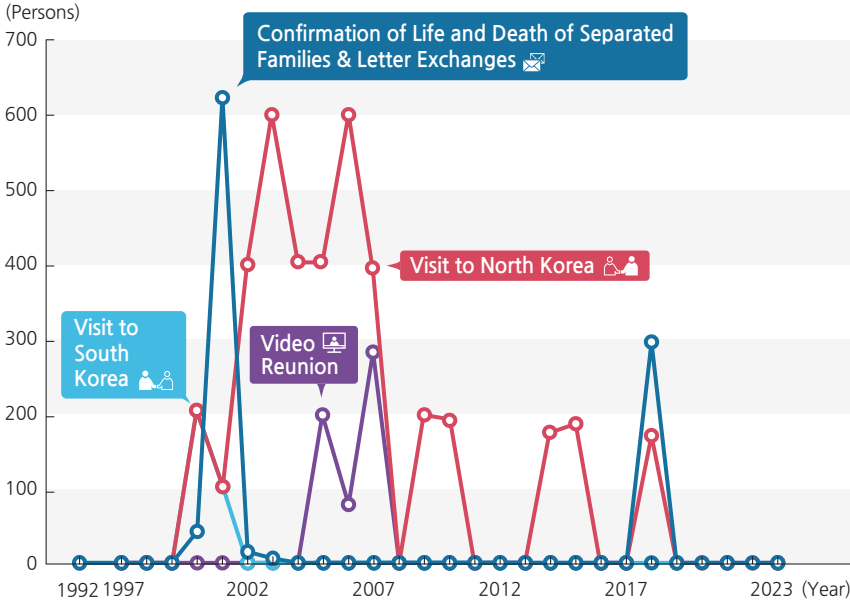
At the summit held on April 27, 2018, at the Peace House on the South Korean side of Panmunjom, the two Koreas announced the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity, and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, which included steps for a declaration to end the Korean War, the establishment of a peace regime, the installation of a direct communication line, and the establishment of a joint liaison office. This was followed by a fourth, unpublicized summit held on May 26, 2018, at Tongilgak on the North Korean side of Panmunjom. The fifth summit was held September 19–20, 2018, in Pyongyang, leading to the adoption of the September 19 Pyongyang Joint Declaration, which included agreements in various fields such as military, economic cooperation, and family reunions, and the September 19 Military Agreement aimed at ending hostile acts, withdrawing guard posts in the DMZ, and creating a maritime peace zone in the West Sea. However, North Korea resumed

Amount of Inter-Korean Trade by Year



Inter-Korean economic cooperation initially began with general trade, including commodity trading, and then expanded to include consignment processing trade and direct investment. General trade and consignment processing accounted for a large proportion of imports from North to South Korea. From 2010, the amount imported from economic cooperation projects, such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex,

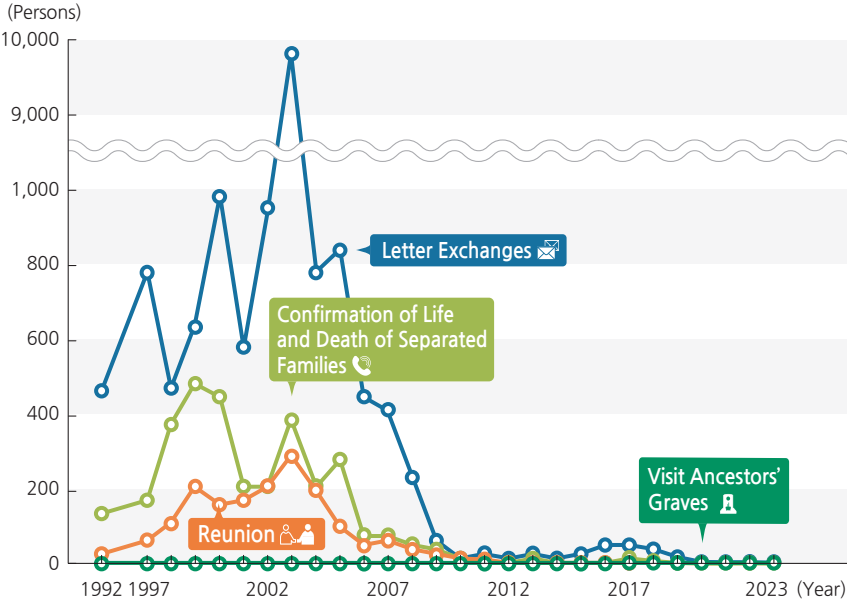
Family Reunions (Governmental Level)



Progress in inter-Korean economic cooperation also positively affected family reunions. From 2000 to 2010, during the peak of economic exchanges, various forms of family reunions were held at both private and governmental levels, including verification of life status, letter exchanges, and reunions, with a total

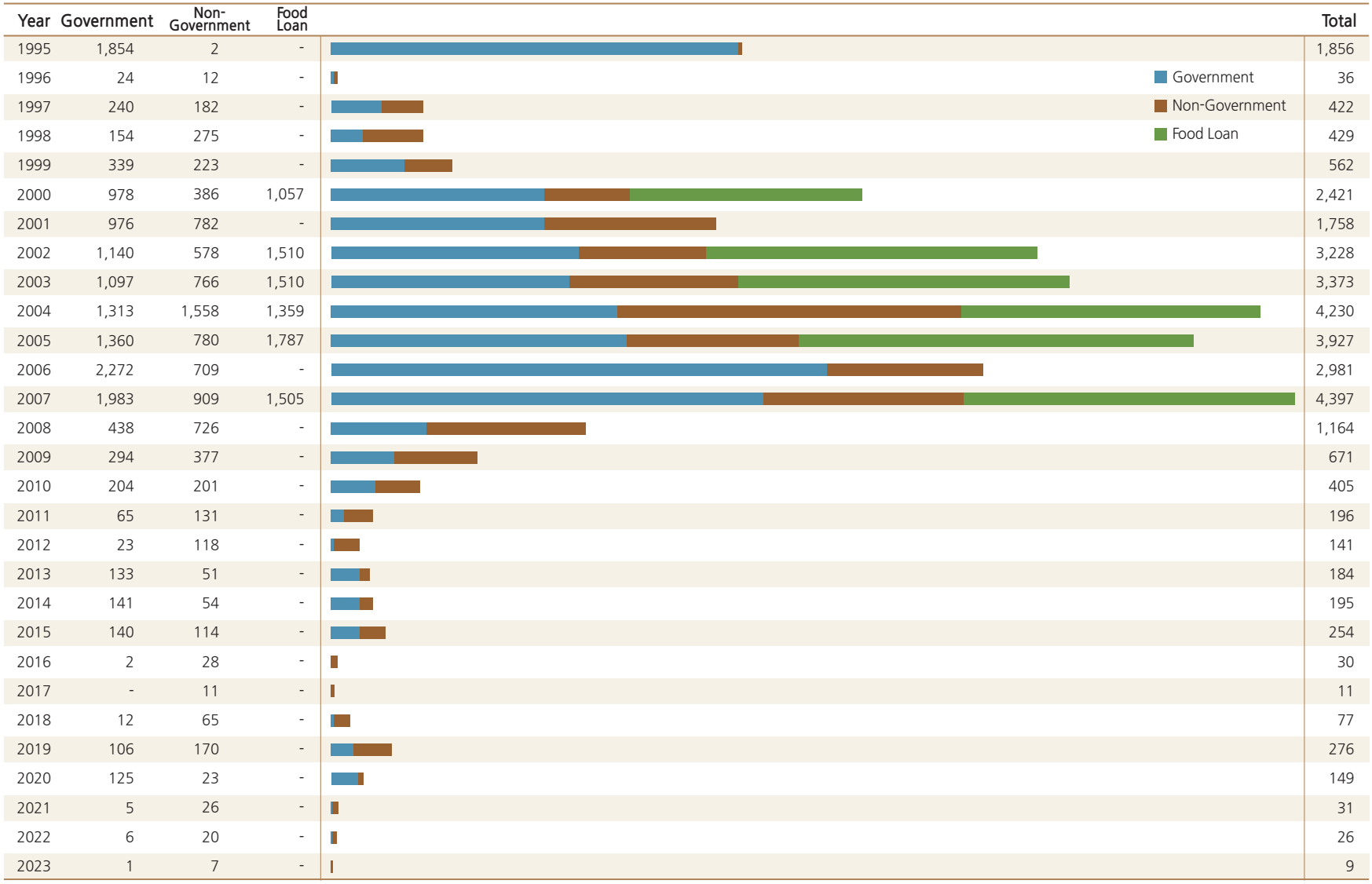
Mount Kumgang tourism, and other light industry cooperation, surpassed general trade and consignment processing for the first time. A similar pattern was seen in exports from South to North Korea, where non-commercial transactions dominated initially, but economic cooperation gradually increased.

Family Reunions (Non-Governmental Level)



of 18 direct and video reunions conducted. However, due to the fluctuating inter-Korean relations, it became challenging to conduct events smoothly, with only three additional reunions held through 2018.

Humanitarian Aid to North Korea



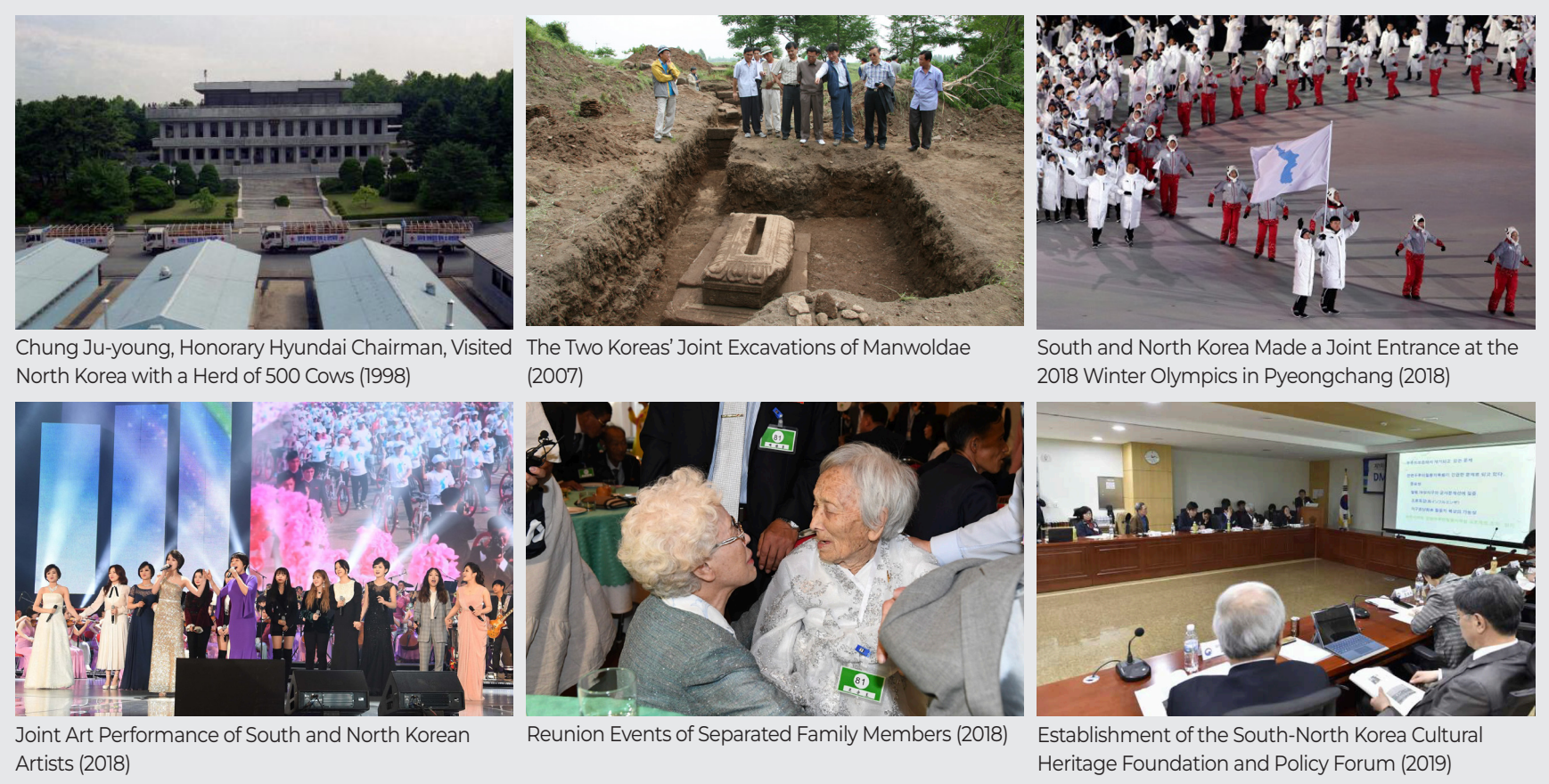
During the Moon Jae-in Administration, inter-Korean exchanges were notably evident in cultural and artistic fields, with South and North Korean athletes forming unified teams for various international competitions. At the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, a unified women's ice hockey team competed, and at the Jakarta-Palembang Asian Games later that year, unified men's and women's dragon boat teams and a women's basketball team competed, achieving notable successes. Additionally, mutual visits by South and North Korean art troupes were realized for the first time in 11 years. Various exchanges in sports, academia, and cultural heritage were actively conducted, including the joint excavation of the Manwoldae site in Kaesong from October to December 2018.

Major inter-Korean economic cooperation projects included tourism in Mount Kumgang, development of the Kaesong Industrial Complex, and the inter-Korean railway and road connection projects. Mount Kumgang tourism began with the signing of the Agreement on the Development of Mount Kumgang Tourism and Joint Advancement into Siberia in 1989 by the late Hyundai Group Honorary Chairman Chung Ju-yung, with the first tour conducted in 1998. More than

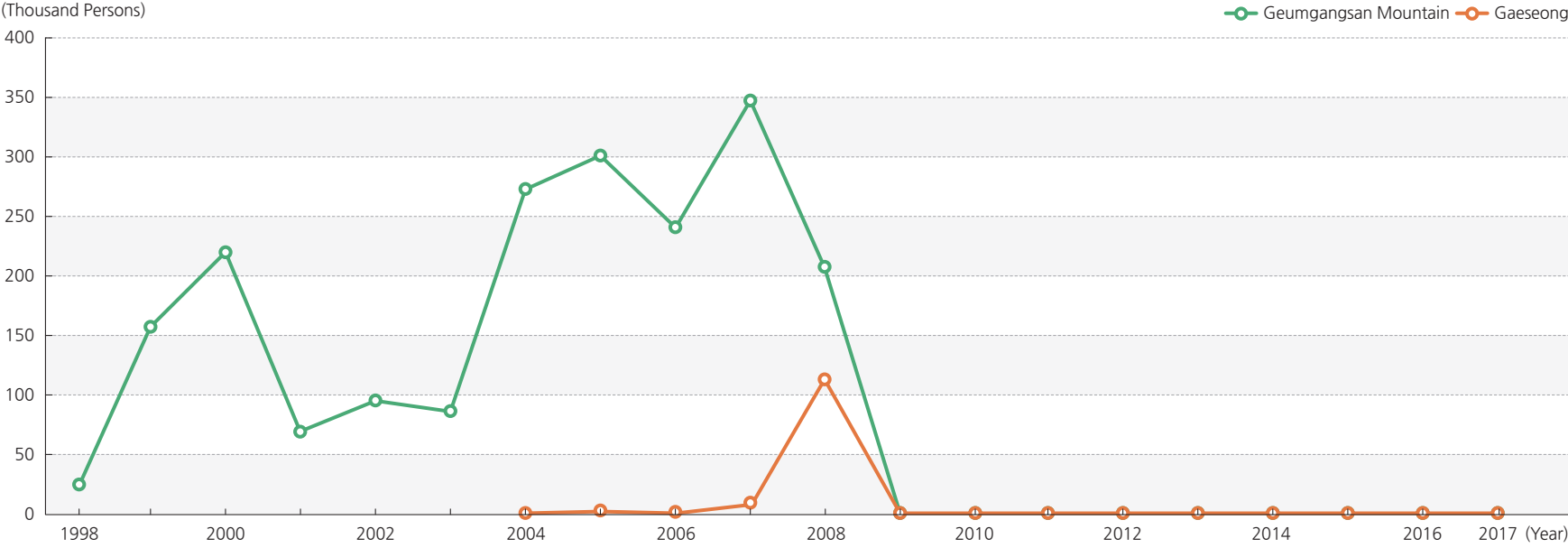
40 South Korean companies, including Hyundai Asan and the Korea Tourism Organization, participated, and in November 2002, North Korea designated the area as a special tourism zone through the Mount Kumgang Tourism District Law. Before its suspension following the fatal shooting of a South Korean tourist in 2008, the Mount Kumgang tourism project had attracted around 2 million visitors.

The Kaesong Industrial Complex project began in August 2000 with an agreement between Hyundai Asan in the South and the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee in the North. Development of the first phase, covering 3.3 million square meters, began on June 30, 2003, with companies starting to move in by 2005. In April 2013, the complex was closed due to North Korea's strong opposition to South Korea-U.S. joint military exercises. However, in August of the same year, the two Koreas reached a dramatic agreement to resume operations. Nevertheless, in 2016, following North Korea's nuclear test, inter-Korean relations quickly deteriorated, leading to its closure. As of 2024, operations remain suspended. Before the closure, the Kaesong Industrial Complex housed approximately 55,000 workers from both Koreas and 125 companies, with cumulative production worth USD 3.23 billion.

Inter-Korean Social and Cultural Exchanges



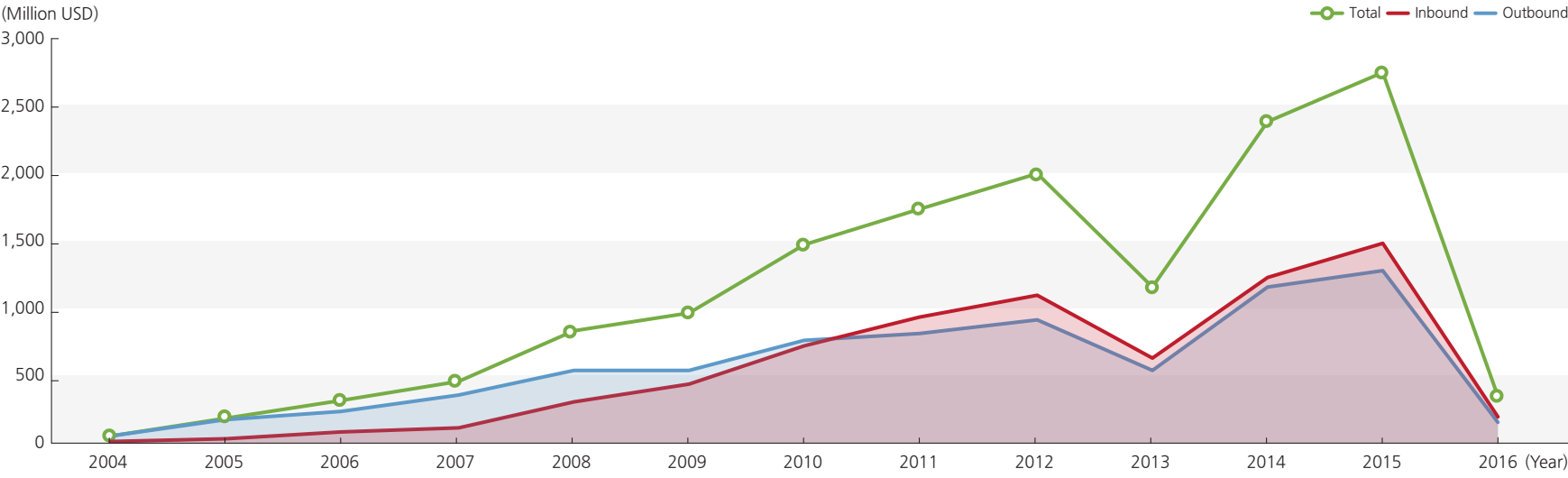
Tourism Trends for Geumgangsan Mountain and Kaesong



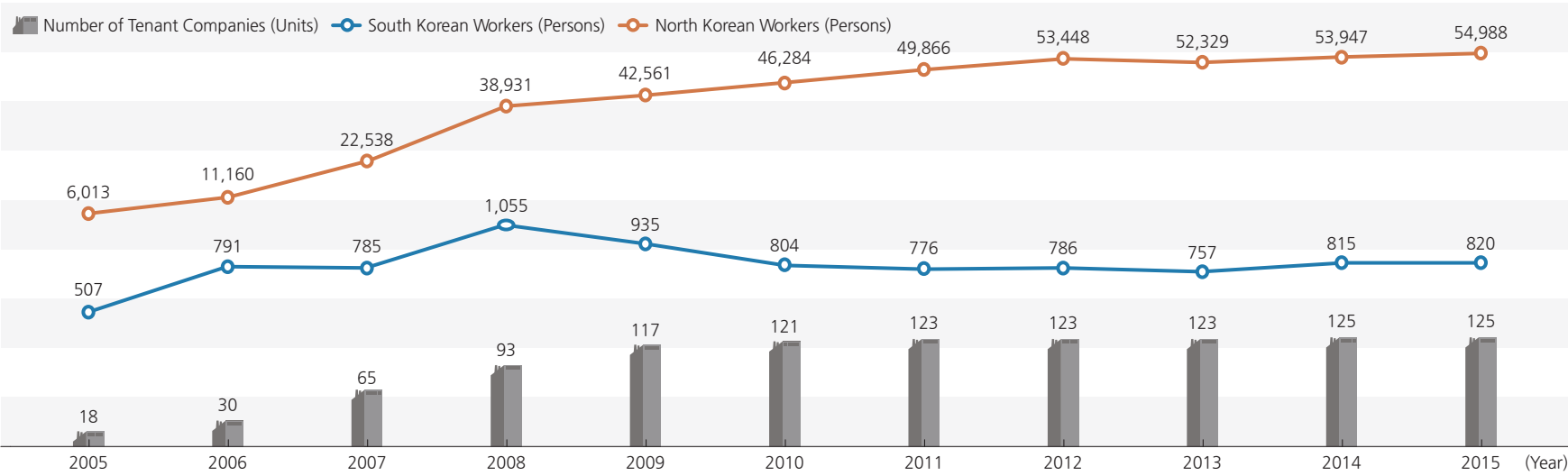
Landscape of the Kaesong Industrial Complex

Workers of Kaesong Industrial Complex

Amount of Inter-Korean Trade



Number of Companies and Workers in Kaesong Industrial Complex



The 1991 Basic Agreement between the South and North included provisions for reconnecting severed railways and roads and opening maritime and air routes. At the first and second inter-Korean ministerial talks held in 2000, the two sides agreed to connect the Gyeongui Line railway (Seoul—Sinuiju) and road (Munsan—Kaesong). In early 2003, temporary passage for the Kaesong Industrial Complex development began via the Gyeongui Line road, and the Donghae Line road was also opened for Mount Kumgang land tourism after the opening ceremony on February 11, 2003. In May 2007, test runs of trains were conducted between Munsan Station and Kaesong Station on the Gyeongui Line and between Geumgangsán Station and Jejin Station on the Donghae Line. Regular freight train services between Munsan and Kaesong (Bongdong) began in December of the same year. However, due to the deteriorating inter-Korean relations, train operations were suspended in December 2008, and the Donghae Line road operation was halted in July 2008. As of 2024, all related projects are suspended.

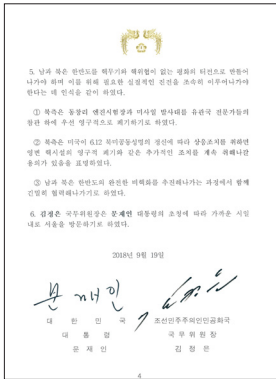
In the Panmunjom Declaration, adopted at the first inter-Korean summit in 2018, South and North Korea initially agreed to connect and modernize the East and Gyeongui railway lines and roads for their utilization. As a follow-up measure, the Inter-Korean Railway Cooperation Subcommittee meeting, held on June 26, 2018 for the first time in 10 years, decided to jointly inspect the sections for inter-Korean railway connections and conduct an on-site joint survey in North Korea as a preliminary project for the modernization of the East and Gyeongui railway lines. As a result, from November 30 for 18 days, a joint survey was conducted on the Gyeongui Line section from Kaesong to Sinuiju (approximately 400 km) and the

East Sea Line section from Mount Kumgang to the Tumen River (approximately 800 km), and a groundbreaking ceremony was held at Panmun Station in Kaesong on December 26.

At the third inter-Korean summit held in Pyongyang in September, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration included agreements on military measures to end the military hostile relations, inter-Korean economic cooperation, humanitarian cooperation, and various other areas. As an annex to the Pyongyang Joint Declaration, the Military Agreement on the Implementation of the Historic Panmunjom Declaration, also known as the September 19 Military Agreement, was adopted. The September 19 Military Agreement covers existing inter-Korean military agreements, including the cessation of hostile acts, the establishment of a peace zone in the DMZ, the creation of a West Sea peace zone, military assurances necessary for exchange and cooperation, and measures to build military trust. As a practical measure, a mine removal operation was conducted in the Arrowhead Ridge area of Cheorwon, Gangwon Province, on October 1, 2018, for the joint recovery of remains. At the same time, the demilitarization of the Joint Security Area (JSA) began, including the withdrawal of guard posts and firearms, personnel adjustments, and joint verification by the South, North, and the United Nations Command, which was completed by the end of October. Additionally, on November 1, a trial withdrawal of guard posts within 1 km of each other in the DMZ was carried out, and by November 30, the dismantling and destruction of ten DMZ guard posts was completed, except for one that was preserved.

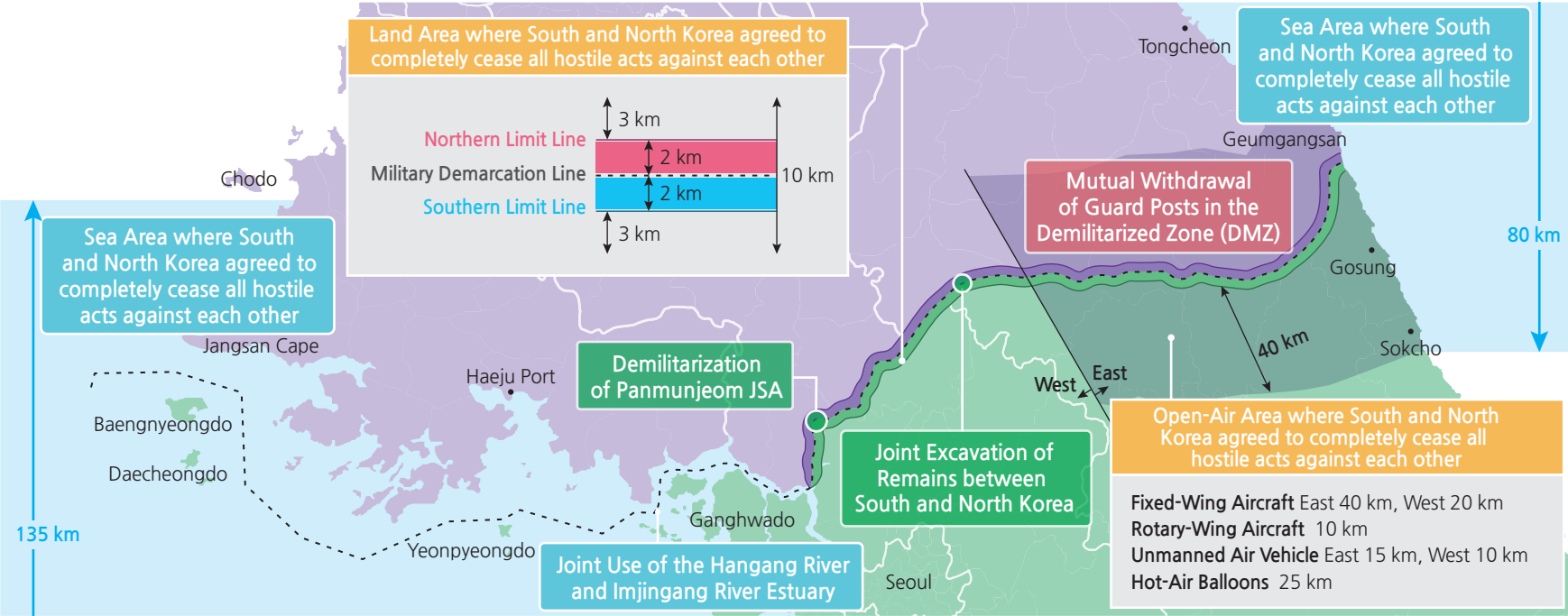


The Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula (2018)



Gyeongui Road Transit Facilities

Inter-Korean Summit Agreement on Military Sector (2018)



Destruction of Guard Posts on the Central Front in Cheorwon



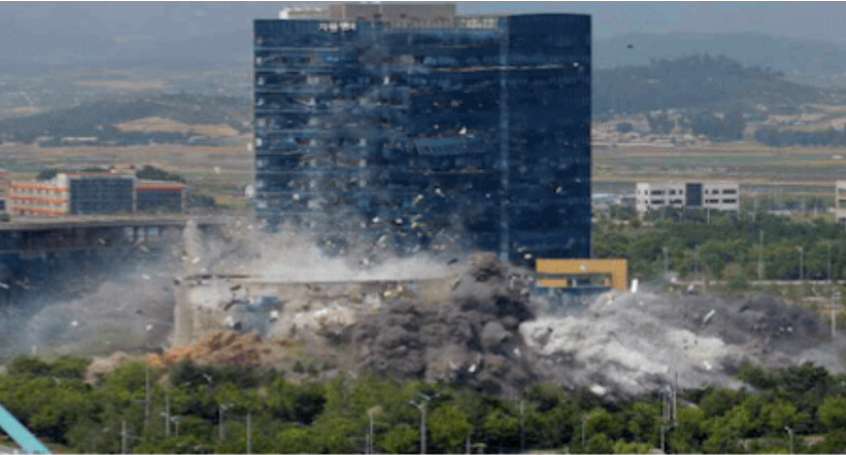
Pilot Withdrawal of Guard Posts



Mutual Verification of Withdrawal of Guard Posts between South and North Korea



Removal of Landmines



Inter-Korean Liaison Office Bombing

The Yoon Suk-yeol government, inaugurated in 2022, has so far taken a firm stance toward North Korea. The government has determined that North Korea continues provocative acts, such as launching cruise missiles and ballistic missiles, which constitute a total violation of the September 19 Military Agreement. In response, the government maintains a strong policy stance toward North Korea,

including imposing independent sanctions on North Korean individuals and institutions involved in the development of weapons of mass destruction and missiles. Furthermore, in 2024, the government enacted the North Korean Human Rights Act and established related institutions and organizations to protect and promote the human rights of North Korean residents.