

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Geography

Generally considered as part of East Asia, South Korea occupies the southern portion of the Korean peninsula. Established in 1948, South Korea encompasses an area of 98,824 square kilometers of which 22 per cent, or 21,741 square kilometers, is cultivated. South Korea is approximately twice the size of Nova Scotia in terms of land mass.

South Korea is bordered on the north by the Communist state of North Korea. To the west lies the Yellow Sea, to the east the Sea of Japan and to the south the Strait of Korea.

The major ports along the east coast are Mukho and Pohany. Mukho serves as a base for several major fisheries. Pohany's main industry is a large integrated iron and steel mill. Inchon and Kunsan are the port cities on the west coast. Inchon, which has been famous since it served as a staging area for the allied amphibious landing during the Korean War, is important as a gateway to Seoul. The major ports along the south coast are Ulsan, Pusan, Chinhae, Masan, Yosu and Mokpo. Ulsan is well known for its industrial complex. Pusan is the oldest and largest port city in Korea. It has the most modern port facilities in the country. Chinhae is important as a naval base. Masan, equipped with ideal conditions for a natural harbour, serves as a base for fisheries, as does Yosu.

The east coast is mountainous, with elevations of up to 2,000 metres. In contrast, the west coast has gently sloping hills and mountains. Unlike Canada, there are no vast plains in Korea. The plains that do exist are on the western side of the country.

At present there are a total of nine provinces and four special cities. The four special cities - Seoul, Pusan, Taegu and Inchon are given the same administrative status as a province. The provinces and their respective capital cities are as follows:

<u>Provinces</u>	<u>Capitals</u>
Cheju	Cheju
North Cholla	Chonju
South Cholla	Kwangju
North Ch ungch ong	Ch ongju
South Ch ungch ong	Paejon
Kangwon	Ch unchon
Kyonggi	Seoul
North Kyongsang	Paegu
South Kyongsang	Pusan