

S.Korea aims to create 2.4 million jobs via creative economy

SEOUL, June 4 (Xinhua) -- South Korea aimed to create around 2.4 million more jobs by 2017 through the so-called "creative economy" and the reduction in working hours, the finance ministry said Tuesday. The government of President Park Geun-hye planned to add 2,381, 000 jobs over the next five years, or an annual increase of 476, 000 jobs, by enhancing industrial structure through the creative economy and reducing working hours, according to the joint statement by the Ministry of Strategy and Finance and the Ministry of Employment and Labor. President Park, who took office in February, sought the creative economy, or a concept to converge science and information technology to the entire industry that can be believed to create jobs from newly created industries. If the goal is achieved as planned, the hiring rate would rise to 70 percent in 2017, according to the statement. The hiring rate measures the percentage of working people to the working age population, or those aged 15 and over. The rate is an alternative gauge to the jobless rate for assessing labor market conditions. The employment rate in South Korea has stayed in the narrow range of 63-64 percent over the past 10 years as the trend of growth without employment lasted since 1990s. The recent low growth trend has worsened the hiring rate even lower. " Industrial structure centered on manufacturing exporters, worsening job-creating capability. Small companies and the service sector create most of jobs, but they have low productivity. Culture of long working hours hampered job creation," the finance ministry said. To reduce working hours, the government has planned to revise laws to minimize excessive weekend or holiday works, while expanding part-time or hourly jobs. The government has also planned to encourage more women and young people to join the labor market through various programs, while supporting women's leave for child care. To induce senior citizens to join economic activities, the retirement age will be lengthened to 60, while building the ground for extending the retirement age to 65. Under the slogan of the creative economy, the government has planned to help financing of small growth companies with great innovation and technology, while upgrading the structure of the service industry.