

WORLD REPORTS ON UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE



COUNTRY	Korea		
STATE PARTY	No	DATE	
SOURCE	<i>Whan Suk Moon</i>	DATE	
LEGISLATION	'the Cultural Heritage Protection Act' of 1962, complemented by 'The Act on the Protection and Investigation of Buried Cultural Heritage' of 2010		
COMPETENT AUTHORITY	For underwater excavation – the National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage; registration and permission for investigation - the Cultural Heritage Administration.		

Korean statutes of Underwater Cultural Heritage protection, a product of underwater excavation and the stance of the 2001 Underwater Heritage Convention

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1. The protection of cultural heritage in Korea started when 'the Cultural Heritage Protection Act' was established in January 1962 without specific recognition of underwater cultural heritage yet. However, underwater excavation has significantly developed since, as there was a necessity for a more specific protection plan. In 2010, 'The Act on the Protection and Investigation of Buried Cultural Heritage' was established to complement 'the Cultural Heritage Protection Act'. This act contains clear articles for identification of underwater cultural heritage and areas of uncovered cultural heritage. It can be said that a progressive legal system of underwater cultural heritage has been prepared.

2. The underwater cultural heritage survey in Korea is divided into two parts: surface investigation and excavation. Certified service organizations are able to conduct investigation with the registration and permission from the Cultural Heritage Administration. Six organizations are registered for surface investigation. However, the National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage' is the only institute authorized to conduct underwater excavation, taking exclusive responsibility for Korean underwater cultural heritage excavations.

3. In Korea, the number of discoveries and reports for underwater cultural heritage mount up to approximately 250 since 1971. The beginning of underwater excavation was the Shinan shipwreck in 1976, and at the present, 11 shipwrecks and 95,000 ceramics and wooden artefacts have been excavated from 18 areas. However, Korean sea areas have many drawbacks for underwater excavation such as quick tide, muddy vision in water, and low

temperature in the winter season. That is why we focus on point ended-facilities and increased human capacity.

4. The National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage which I work for, constructed the 'Taeon conservation center' in 2011 for the safety of cultural properties in Taeon sea areas where underwater excavations are concentrated. In addition, a special salvage ship for underwater excavation (290 tons) is in the process of being built, which is the first of its kind in East Asia. Furthermore, a space for complex research and exhibition of underwater cultural heritage in Taeon is expected to open in 2015. This space is going to be used as an advanced base for Korean underwater archaeology.

5. The Korean Cultural Heritage Administration is working together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs to determine issue of ratifying the Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention.