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## ROH RETURNS FROM AFRICA TRIP

By Ryu Jin

ALGIERS, Algeria \_ President Roh Moo-hyun returns home Tuesday (KST), after winding up a nine-day visit to three African countries, focused on economic cooperation with the energy-abundant continent.

During the first African tour by a South Korean head of state in nearly 25 years, Roh produced a number of tangible outcomes, including a contract struck between Nigeria and South Korea for joint development of large-scale oil fields under deep waters.

While staying in Egypt from March 6-9, Roh agreed with President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak to further strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries, especially in the information-technology (IT) sector as well as energy and resources.

He also discussed ways of promoting relations between South Korea and the Islamic world in a meeting with Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki-moon also met him and representatives from the 22 member states.

In Nigeria, South Korea signed a two billion-barrel oil development project that would enable South Korea to secure some 1.2 billion barrels of petroleum in the coming years.

The two sides also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for comprehensive energy cooperation.

Following his three-day stay in Nigeria, Roh flew to Algeria on Saturday for a summit with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The two leaders adopted a joint declaration for a strategic partnership.

Pursuing active economic development after decades of political turmoil, the three African nations expressed their desire to attract more South Korean investments in economic projects, such as construction of infrastructure.

Roh and the African leaders also exchanged views on regional and international security situations, such as the North Korean nuclear standoff, and agreed to increase cooperation in the international arena.

Roh also disclosed South Korea's Initiative for Africa's Development, setting forth a

vision that world peace and common prosperity of the 21st century should be realized together with African countries.

While talking over lunch with business leaders from Nigeria and South Korea in Nigeria, he said that Seoul would triple its Official Development Assistance (ODA) bound for Africa to some \$100 million by 2008.

To share its experience of economic development, South Korea would invite a total of 1,000 African people in the coming three years to hand over know-how acquired in the course of economic growth.