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Opening of COMEUP 2024

SEJONG – The largest global startup event in Korea, COMEUP 2024, opened on Wednesday, December 11 at COEX in Seoul.

During the opening ceremony, domestic and international innovative entrepreneurs marked the beginning of COMEUP 2024. CEO YOON Chan of EverEx Inc. and CEO Sina Albanese of Koralo took the stage to deliver opening speeches on behalf of the domestic and global attendees, respectively. CEO YOON Chan of EverEx Inc. has continued to achieve remarkable success since being selected as a COMEUP Stars 2022 participant by developing a digital rehabilitation therapy solution for musculoskeletal disorders, winning an innovation award at CES 2024. German national Sina Albanese founded the startup Koralo, which develops and supplies vegan fish alternatives, and established a corporation in Korea after winning the K-Startup Grand Challenge 2022 and successfully settling in the country. The two representatives declared the opening of COMEUP 2024, welcoming attendees who came with the dream of “Startup Korea.” They shared their thoughts and experiences about Korea's startup ecosystem and COMEUP, encouraging innovation and challenges in “Korea, a great place to start a business.”

Next, Minister Oh Youngju of SMEs and Startups took the stage to deliver congratulatory remarks, welcoming attendees from around the world who have come to visit COMEUP. She expressed her support for global entrepreneurs who will lead “innovation that transcends the boundaries of nations and technologies.” Minister Oh highlighted how startups are finding breakthroughs through innovation even amid global complex crises, contributing to solving social issues, thus emphasizing the importance of innovation. Furthermore, she stated that MSS will support Korea's role as a central player in the global startup ecosystem, outlining the policy goals and plans for the year 2025. Minister OH mentioned the aim to establish Korea as one of the world's top four venture investment countries, strengthening support for domestic startups' overseas expansion, and actively attracting outstanding foreign entrepreneurs. She

also emphasized the commitment to nurturing deep tech startups to help Korea move forward as a first mover in the competitive global technology landscape.

COMEUP 2024 is being held under the theme "Innovation Beyond Borders" at COEX in Seoul from December 11 to 12, featuring participation from entrepreneurs and venture ecosystem stakeholders, including innovative startups and investors from over 40 countries. It will serve as a venue for exchange and networking. The event includes various programs focusing on three specific sub-themes: ① Deep Tech, ② Inbound, and ③ Sustainable Innovation by Startup (SIS). The lineup of activities includes startup exhibitions, conferences, keynote speeches, IR pitching sessions, open innovation programs, and legal consultation for startups.

A total of approximately 260 domestic and international startups are participating in the exhibition, with more than half being overseas startups. The UAE, India, Japan, and Sweden have set up national pavilions to promote their respective startups. In addition, exhibition zones dedicated to specific deep tech technologies such as big data, AI, and biohealth will be operated, allowing attendees to experience innovative technologies in the deep tech sector from both Korea and abroad.

The conference, keynote speeches, and panel discussion sessions will feature prominent figures from around the world, who will share insights with attendees on various topics such as global expansion, attracting investment, and deep tech trends. Experts from a range of sectors, including domestic and international corporations, corporate venture capital (CVC) firms, and foreign government officials, will participate to discuss global solidarity and collaboration centered around startups. Approximately 70 key overseas venture capital representatives are also expected to visit COMEUP to discover innovative startups.

Meanwhile, many foreign entrepreneurs aspiring to start a business in Korea are participating in COMEUP 2024. Over 20 overseas startups are taking part in the "Startup Korea Pavilion," a dedicated exhibition space for foreign startups looking to enter the Korean market, promoting their business ideas to local startups and investors. Notably, CEO Carlos El-Kik Lloret of AiMA Beyond AI, which was the first company to receive the newly introduced "Startup Korea Special Visa" in November 2023, is also participating in the exhibition. AiMA, a Spanish startup that develops digital human solutions utilizing AI, had planned to relocate its headquarters to Korea but faced challenges in obtaining a regular startup visa due to educational qualifications. However, with the creation of the "Startup Korea Special Visa," which evaluates only the innovation and excellence of the startup idea, opportunities for entry into the Korean market have been opened.

The detailed program for COMEUP 2024 can be found on the official COMEUP website (<https://comeup.org>), and anyone interested in the global startup and venture ecosystem can

participate in COMEUP 2024 through pre-registration on the website or onsite registration. Major events of COMEUP 2024, including the opening ceremony, can also be attended via live broadcasts on the official YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/@COMEUP_org).