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|  |  | Cultural Heritage Administration NEWS  |
| Division: Natural Cultural Heritage Research Institute, National Research Institute of Cultural HeritageContact person: Kang Jung-hoon (042-610-7630), Lee Sung-kyung (042-860-9288) |  |  |

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| **National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage to provide braille books about natural monuments to all children in schools for the blind nationwide**- Soccer player Son Heung-min and actor Song Joong-ki participated in the production through voice donation- |

In commemoration of the ‘White Cane Day’ on October 15th, the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (Director Ji Byeong-mok) of the Cultural Heritage Administration decided to distribute ***The* *Natural Heritage Multimedia Braille Book***, which introduces animals designated as natural monuments in Braille and audio commentary, to **all children in 13 schools for the blind nationwide (221 students, 1 book per student).**

**\* White Cane Day: Designated by the World Blind Union to protect the rights of the visually impaired On October 15, 1980**

***The Natural Heritage Multimedia Braille Book*** is a book that introduces the sounds of 70 species of animals designated as natural monuments through detailed appearance descriptions, voice commentary with related folk songs and children's songs and Braille. This is a booklet about natural heritage that has been published for 2 years by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage for the visually impaired who do not have easy access to natural monuments.

When first published in October 2020, 450 copies were made and 5 copies were provided to each of 13 schools for the blind nationwide, and the rest were distributed to Braille libraries and organizations related to the visually impaired (associations and foundations). This year, a total of 570 copies will be made and one copy will be provided to all 221 students in 13 schools for the blind, and the rest will be distributed to students with visual impairment in general schools. Especially this time, various opinions presented by visually impaired people who are actual users of the booklet while using the booklet produced last year and the opinion of the National Policy Design Group were reflected to improve readability further by raising braille higher than before, and simplifying the detailed drawing. Another feature is that adding the use of the sound pen in Braille made it easier to use the booklet. For reference, all braille was made as special braille in the form of water drops using natural materials.

In particular, soccer player Son Heung-min participated in person and contributed to his talent through his voice, and was in charge of the commentary for the 'Golden Eagle' episode, and the 'Hawk, Musk Deer, and Owl' episode was inserted as an explanation using the voice reproduction of actor Song Joong-ki. To reproduce the voice of the actor, artificial intelligence (AI) speech conversion technology developed by Lion Rocket with the support of SK C&C (hereinafter SK C&C) was used.

Through the 'AIA Vitality x T Health Habit' application jointly operated by AIA Life Insurance Co., Ltd. (hereinafter AIA Life Insurance) and SK C&C, Good Walk Campaign for the people was conducted from April to June, and AIA Life Insurance donated the number of steps earned through the voluntary participation of 12,983 citizens and used them for the publication cost of the book. As shown in this case, this production is meaningful as an example of active administration as the people and companies participated in the publication.

It is expected to be beneficial to children with visual impairment as the ecology of animals, which are natural monuments, and the characteristics of each animal, such as appearance and habits, are expressed in Braille and interesting stories so that the visually impaired can easily understand them, and the included sound pen allows them to listen to the contents freely.

The National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage of the Cultural Heritage Administration plans to develop and provide various contents so that people who are in the cultural blind spot can easily enjoy our cultural assets.

Attachment: Photos. End.