



# THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

335 East 45<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, N.Y. 10017  
Tel (212) 439-4000, Fax (212) 986-1083

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**Statement by Ms. Hong Wook-jin, 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretary**

**Third Committee**

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**Agenda item 62 (a) (b): Advancement of Women**

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Mr. Chairman,

There has been much progress in realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past years. It results from the untiring endeavors of Member States and related UN agencies, bearing in mind to fulfill the internationally agreed upon standards such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and other commitments.

While we celebrate such progress, however, there are a number of women and girls around the world still suffering from persisting discrimination and even severe violence. It indicates that we should strive to translate all of our commitments into actions and make a difference to benefit vulnerable women in the real world.

In particular, given the fact that the coming 2010 year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of CEDAW, the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, it is an appropriate time to review the achievements and the remaining gaps and challenges.



This reflection process, including today's discussion under agenda item 62, is expected to serve as a guiding point to navigate a future direction where we no longer need to discuss gender equality, discrimination, or violence against women.

Mr. Chairman,

Taking this opportunity, the Republic of Korea would like to share its views on dealing with the challenges ahead of us, among them being women exposed to vulnerable situations. As the Secretary-General's reports on rural women and women migrant workers express, we must take more vigorous initiatives to meet the needs of women in specific situations who are influenced by the recent increases in urbanization and migration. It requires governments to pay particular attention to newly emerging challenges that women face.

Let me introduce my government's efforts in this area. Lately, the Republic of Korea has received many women migrants seeking for jobs or new lives through international marriages. This trend brings a multiple task for the government to tackle, such as the establishment of a social mechanism for securing their human rights, especially from discrimination or violence, and furthermore, support for their full integration into Korean society.

In this vein, my government established the *1577-1366 Center*, providing not only emergency assistance services, but also ordinary counseling in eight different languages for women migrants married to Korean men. This service runs 24 hours a day all year-round.

Mr. Chairman,

We are faced with major global challenges in our time, including conflict and climate change, which disproportionately have an impact on women, especially for those living in developing or conflict-affected countries. The international community expresses its deep concerns on violence against women in conflict areas through the adoption of a series of Resolutions at the UN Security Council. In particular, we welcome the newly published Secretary-General's report S/2009/362 and subsequent Security Council's Resolutions 1888 and 1889, which call for increasing the number of women in senior positions within the United Nations, especially throughout the peace process.

Moreover, the climate change issue will be discussed at the upcoming December Copenhagen meeting. In the course for seeking fundamental and comprehensive solutions to address these issues, we should focus on the potential of women's leadership and active participation in this field. In this regard, my delegation would like to encourage that gender consideration be included in the climate change agreement in December in a manner that guarantees the participation of women in decision-making on climate change.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation believes our success or failure to overcome all of these gaps and challenges largely depends on the overall capacity of the UN system to pursue gender equality and women's empowerment. In this respect, strengthening Gender Architecture is a critical juncture. We are very much looking forward to the early establishment of a Composite Entity, which will render all Member States a renewed momentum in fulfilling gender equality.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea, as a champion of the advancement of women within the Asia region, will continue to collaborate with Member States and the UN system to respond to global challenges. We reaffirm our special attention given to women in vulnerable situations while focusing on increasing women's leadership as well as strengthening our partnership.

Thank you for your attention.

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Mr. Chairman, honorable delegates, distinguished fellow youth delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is one of the most humbling moments for me to be present here as a female youth delegate of my country to the UN General Assembly, and I feel a solemn sense of responsibility and honor to represent over 10 million youths of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Chairman, we live in the world confronted with unprecedented challenges, which threaten the security and wellbeing of the most vulnerable within society, the women. I'd like to suggest some solutions focusing on three main topics of World Programme of Action for Youth; the environment, employment, and the empowerment of girls and young women.

Environmental degradation began to threaten the women's lives. This climate change issue will be discussed at the coming December Copenhagen meeting. Our journey to seek the fundamental and comprehensive solutions to address these issues should start from changing our perception on gender equality. The participation of women should be guaranteed. The international collaboration should be made to recognize gender equality as an integral part in creating an environmentally sustainable society.

Currently, the world experiences the 'Global Financial Crisis.' Its impact has put most of MDG targets at risk of becoming a lost cause; one of the most affected being Goal 3, achieving, gender equality, in the labor market. With the estimated global unemployment rate hovering around 7 percent, the effect is expected to be worse for women, who not only face the higher unemployment rate projection, but also the higher vulnerability of losing industries and services where they can practice a decent profession.

Recognizing the dilemma of women in striking a balance between family life and a professional career, the Korean government has introduced the 4<sup>th</sup> Basic Plan for Equal Employment and Work-Family Life Reconciliation, to promote women's empowerment and effectively help them handle their responsibilities for managing their work in sync with family life. Also, it has designated 50 support organizations as the New Occupation Center for Women (NOCW) to provide a one-stop overall employment service for women in order to help them regain decent employment and restart their careers.

However, more needs to be done in order to help the estimated 10 to 22 million women on the brink of unemployment by the end of 2009. We must prevent the crisis from evolving into a more serious one causing the rising number of women to engage in either unpaid or unstable jobs and to have their already low wages cut even more.

Mr. Chairman, the challenges that lie ahead of us today seem rather imposing and insurmountable. However, history tells us that human development lies in not remembering the past mistakes, but taking the responsibility for our future generations. In due respect to this solemn fact, I strongly urge all member states of the United Nations to integrate the voices of youth in their delegations. Let us, the youth stand as the conscience of this generation.

Thank you.