

70 South Korean NGOs Concern on the 'Sae-ma-ul Undong' in the Draft Outcome Document of the 66th DPI/NGO Conference

10 May 2016

We, undersigned 70 South Korean NGOs, are deeply concerned about the draft outcome document of the 66th DPI/NGO Conference which describes the Sae-ma-ul Undong(SMU). In the draft document, it is mentioned that "Sae-ma-ul Undong (SMU) of Korea was an exemplary civic movement that had a significant impact in bridging the economic and infrastructural gap between rural and urban areas. In the 1970s it helped spark decades of national growth, contributing powerfully to the creation of a more equal and just society. We offer it as a model for poverty eradication and development in achieving Agenda 2030 in the context of global citizenship."

The evaluation of SMU remains a controversial topic not only in South Korea, but also in the international community. Although there are claims that it helped modernization of rural areas, including by improving living conditions, some argue that it increased the dependence of rural areas on the government and that the rural economy has not significantly improved and remains fragile. Furthermore, regarding the "civic" nature of the movement, SMU was a forced mass mobilization project led by the state and a control mechanism to justify military dictatorship that emphasized monolithic nationalism and collectivism. Therefore, it is not fair to assess that the state-driven SMU contributed to "reducing economic and infrastructural gaps" or "creating a fairer and more equal society". Above all, the description of SMU denies the massive social gaps and harmful consequences produced by the rapid industrialisation of Korean society in the 1970s, as well as the strong democratisation and labour movements that followed as a result.

In addition, we note with concern that such a 'positive' evaluation of SMU has been spreading systematically and that official development assistance (ODA) employing SMU has expanded extensively, since President Park Geun-hye - the daughter of the military strongman Park Jung-hee - took office. Currently, the government is actively carrying out a project to globalise SMU; however, we have serious doubts as to whether a case of development carried out under special circumstances, such as the military dictatorship in the Republic of Korea in the 1970s, can be uniformly applied to rural development projects in developing countries. The international community has already learned through experience that models of development that do not consider the political, social, cultural and historical specificities of the target communities are not sustainable. In effect, there exist criticisms by field specialists over the implementation process and effectiveness of ODA programs employing SMU, such as the lack of participation of the target community, preparations and planning according to the community's circumstances and needs, professionalism among field personnel, and sustainability. Therefore, it is of deep concern that such a model is being proposed as an exemplary model at an international level.

Therefore, we strongly urge that this paragraph be deleted from the draft outcome document, as it is based on biased and unilateral views.

For further details or media inquiry, please contact Ms. Gayoon Baek (Coordinator, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy): pspdint@pspd.org, +82 2 723 5051

*** This statement is endorsed by below 70 South Korean NGOs**

Catholic Human Rights Committee, Dasan human rights center, Democratic Legal Studies Association, Disability and Human Rights in Action, Gonggam Human Rights Law Foundation, Human Rights Center 'Saram', Human Rights Movement Space 'Hwal', Human Rights Education 'OnDa', Jeju Peace Human Rights Center, Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, Korean House for International Solidarity, Korean Lawyers for Public Interest and Human Rights, "Korean Networks of Human Rights Groups (42 NGOs: Alliance for Enactment of Anti-Discrimination Act, Ansan Labor and Human Rights Center, Buddhism Human Rights Committee, Catholic Human Rights Committee, Cheongju Labor Human Rights Center, Cultural Action, DASAN Human Rights Center, Democratic Legal Studies Association, Disability and Human Rights in Action, Disabled People's International Daegu, Geochang Peace and Human Rights Art Festival Commission, Gwangju Human Rights Activities Center, Human Rights Education Center 'Deul', Human Rights Solidarity for New Society, Joint Committee with Migrants in Korea, Korea HIV/AIDS Network of Solidarity KANOS, Korean Coalition for Abolishment of Insecurity Employment, Korean Contingent Workers' Center, Korean Council for Democratic Martyr, Korean Gay Men's Groups 'Chingusai', Korean House for International Solidarity, Korean Progressive Network 'Jinbonet', Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center, Labor Attorneys for Labor Rights, Migrants Human Rights Solidarity, MINBYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society, Minkahyup Human Rights Group, Network of Accessible Environment for All, People's Solidarity for Social Progress, Samsung Labor Watch, SARANGBANG Group for Human Rights, Seoul Human Rights Film Festival, Solidarity against Disability Discrimination, Solidarity for HIV/AIDS Human Rights Nanuri+, Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea, Solidarity for Peace & Human Rights, The Committee to Support Imprisoned Workers, The National Council of Churches in Korea Human Rights Center, The Research Institute of the Differently Abled People Rights in Korea, Ulsan Solidarity for Human Rights, Won Buddhism Human Rights Committee, World Without War, Korean Progressive Network 'Jinbonet', MINBYUN - Lawyers for a Democratic Society, ODA Watch, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, Rainbow Action Against Sexual-Minority Discrimination (25 NGOs: Chingusai – Korean Gay Men's Human Rights Group, Christian Solidarity for a World without Discrimination, Collective for Sexual Minority Cultures PINKS, Daegu Queer Cultural Festival, GongGam Human Rights Law Foundation, Minority Rights Committee of the Green Party, Jogye Order Social Labour Committee, Korea Queer Culture Festival Organizing Committee, Korean Lawyers for Public Interest and Human Rights(KLPH), Korean lesbian community radio group, Lezpa, "Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center(KSCRC), Labor Party, Sexual Politics Committee, "Lesbian Community Group(Gruteogi)", Lesbian Counseling Center in South Korea, Lesbian Human Rights Group 'Byunnal' of Ewha Womans University, "LGBTAIQ Crossing the damn world (It means Totally Queer)", "LGBTQ Student Alliance of Korea(QUV)", Network for Glocal Activism, Rainbow Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Daegu, Sexual Minority Committee of the Justice Party, "Sinnaneuncenter: LGBT Culture", Arts & Human Rights Center, Solidarity for HIV/AIDS Human Rights Nanuri+, Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea, "The Korean Society of Law and Policy on Sexual

Orientation and Gender Identity(SOGILAW)", "Unninetwork)", SARANGBANG Group for Human Rights, Seoul Human Rights Film Festival, Solidarity Against Disability Discrimination