

THE REPUBLIC OF  
**KOREA**

PERMANENT MISSION  
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**Statement by  
Ambassador CHOI Hyuck  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea**

**on**

**Agenda Item 12  
Integration of the Human Rights of Women  
and the Gender Perspective**

**and**

**Agenda Item 12 (a)  
Violence against Women**

**Before the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of  
the Commission on Human Rights**

**Geneva, April 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

The "Integration of the Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective" has relevance in every aspect of human rights and indeed the entire scope of this Commission's work. As reported in document E/CN.4/2005/68, my delegation takes note of the progress made on gender mainstreaming in the work of this Commission and that of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We fully support the recommendations contained in the report, including those concerning the enhancement of women's participation in human rights activities.

My delegation also welcomes the first report of Ms. Huda, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. It is true that trafficking has often been regarded a law and order issue, with greater focus on the prevention and punishment of perpetrators than on the protection of victims. It is my sincere hope that her work will provide a deeper understanding of the human rights implications of trafficking. I have every confidence that her reports will produce valuable recommendations for future action.

My government has endeavored to fight trafficking in persons. In particular, we have increased our attention paid to the human rights of the victims. My government held an international expert group meeting on trafficking issues last November that focused on the protection of victims. At the national level, we adopted new legislation last year that contains protections for the victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. My government expects to further strengthen our efforts in this regard.

My delegation appreciates the report of Ms. Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women which is dedicated to the distressing issue of the intersection of violence against women and HIV/AIDS. We are obliged to highlight how a lack of respect for the rights of women undermines efforts to counter the HIV/AIDS crisis. This year the international community is actively reviewing the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. HIV/AIDS is one of its main issues. I believe that the Special Rapporteur's analysis and recommendations should be taken into account during our deliberations on how to tackle the pandemic.

Mr. Chairman,

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This occasion is a sobering reminder of the profound misery mankind has inflicted upon itself. But it is also a stern warning that history may repeat itself should we fail to learn from past mistakes.

In this regard, it is a cause of grave concern to the Republic of Korea that, as in 2001, certain history textbooks in Japan which passed screening by the Japanese government on April 5 continue to distort or omit altogether historical facts relating to gross human rights violations committed by Japan in the past. By this I refer particularly

to the forcible mobilization and enslavement of the so-called "comfort women" by the Japanese military during the Second World War. My government expresses its deep concern and resentment that Japan still refuses to come to terms with its past by ignoring our repeated calls for rectification and denying its responsibility for the tremendous pain and suffering it inflicted on the Korean people, not to speak of the countless others.

Mr. Chairman,

Memories may be short. But the pain suffered by these women endures. It would be an irreversible shame of history if the Japanese government did not rectify its past wrong-doings before these women pass away. The window of opportunity will soon close. The Japanese government wants to confine this issue to the past, but this can only happen if it shows the courage to confront its past and engage in a process of truth-finding, sincere apology and genuine contrition. Only on this basis can there be a true reconciliation and forgiveness between our two peoples and the world over.

I thank you.