

THE REPUBLIC OF

KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION
1 Avenue de l'Ariana, 1202 Genève

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Statement by
Ambassador PARK In-kook
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea

on

Agenda Item 10
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Before the 61st Session of
the Commission on Human Rights

Geneva, March 2005

Mr. Chairman,

In this globalizing world, despite its many opportunities for economic growth and increased employment, there remain large portions of humanity still suffering from poverty, economic and social marginalization, and inequality. These challenges threaten the security of individuals and the peace of communities at both the domestic and international levels. This situation reminds us that the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCRs) remains a responsibility of all states.

In order for states to effectively discharge this obligation, we believe both international and national action are needed. We have no doubt that international cooperation is an essential element. Particularly, given the concerns by developing countries about their limited capacity to participate in the global economy my delegation believes that one of the major challenges we face is making the benefits of globalization available to all.

External assistance and cooperation, however, cannot play a sustainable role unless individual countries make efforts to transform their economic, social and political institutions. In this regard, we would like to emphasize the importance of good governance, exemplified by the rule of law, transparency, accountability, democratic institutional arrangements and thoughtfully formulated policies with focus and coherence, particularly those directed at poverty reduction and expanded education.

My delegation would like to draw the Commission's attention to the report by the High Commissioner on the Seminar on Good Governance Practices for the Promotion of Human Rights, held in my

country in September 2004, which highlights the mutually reinforcing relations between good governance, poverty reduction and overall effectiveness of governments' responses to the needs of their people.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is pleased to note that ongoing discussions on the optional protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has provided very meaningful opportunities to highlight the importance of ESCRs and to explore ways to realize these rights.

We strongly associate ourselves with the basic principle of equal importance and indivisibility of civil and political rights and ESCRs and with concerns over a relatively low level of attention paid to ESCRs. We believe that further discussions are needed to work out the best possible way to promote the effective implementation of the Covenant on ESCRs, including the introduction of an individual complaint mechanism. The Korean government is willing to continue to engage in the discussions and is eager to hear about the legal experiences of other countries and regions on this issue. We believe that our discussions need to be guided not only by legal analysis but also by careful consideration of the need to enhance the overall efficiency of human rights treaty monitoring mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

Given the fact that there are a variety of views regarding interpretation and implementation of ESCRs, we attach great importance to the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), in providing legal guidance for the implementation of ESCRs. We encourage the Committee to continue to work hard to provide general comments which serve as guides for

all State Parties in their efforts to realize ESCRs. Particularly, we expect that the committee's current consideration of a draft general comment on article 3 of the Covenant, the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all ESCRs, will contribute to strengthening gender equality in the realization to ESCRs.

We also thank the Special Rapporteurs, independent experts, and the OHCHR for their works, which we believe continues to enrich our discussions on this issue. Given the indivisibility and interrelatedness of all human rights and the particular importance of economic development in the realization of ESCRs, inter-agency and multi-sectoral collaboration is becoming more important in our work. In this regard, my delegation is satisfied with their collaboration with the various agencies and mechanisms in the human rights system, the UN specialized agencies, and the international financial and trade institutions, and we encourage them to strengthen such efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to work closely with other member states in helping this Commission discharge its important mandate to advance the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. /End.