

**Statement by  
H.E. Ambassador PARK In-kook  
Deputy Permanent Representative  
of the Republic of Korea**

**on**

**Agenda Item 9**

**Question of the violation of human rights and  
fundamental freedoms in any part of the world**

**Before the 61st Session of the Commission on  
Human Rights**

**Geneva, 23 March 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

In the last year we have witnessed the advancement of human rights in a number of countries in which increased citizen participation and the greater institutionalization of democracy have been evident. Regrettably, though, in some other parts of the globe, severe abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms continue to be a source of serious concern.

In many parts of Africa, protracted conflicts threaten not only the right to freedom from arbitrary detention and torture but even the fundamental right to life. A lack of resources and capacities for the protection of human rights poses another challenge in the region. Despite positive steps towards political, legal and social reform in recent years across the Middle East, ongoing conflicts and continued violence in the region cast a dark cloud.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, while the region has the highest rate of ratification of international human rights treaties in the developing world, economic and social discrimination have been barriers to respect for human rights. In Asia, democratic systems of government are being put in place in an increasing number of nations. However, dictatorships persist in some countries, with continuing abuses of human rights. Moreover, there have also been some regressive developments in other parts of the world.

All these underscore the need for greater attention in monitoring human rights and involvement on our part in protecting victims of human rights violations. Even though despotic regimes are steadily decreasing in number throughout the world, too many

people are still living under a dark cloud under dictatorships in different corners of the earth. We urge those repressive regimes to pay heed to the outcries of those who have had their fundamental freedoms and human rights denied for too long. It is imperative that they take urgent steps to improve their human rights situations and translate the recommendations of the Commission into action.

The most severe and massive violations of human rights are committed in areas of conflict. The failure to protect civilians in crisis raises serious questions regarding the fundamental capacity of the international community to provide real solutions to contemporary challenges which give rise to these serious human rights violations. We concur with the view of the High Commissioner that our collective responsibilities are more pressing in crisis situations where the lives of many are in immediate peril and governments are unwilling or unable to protect persons within their jurisdiction or control. In this vein, we believe that the principle of "responsibility to protect", (as upheld by the High-level Panel and the Secretary-General of the UN,) is worthy of consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

Democracy is an essential element in the promotion and protection of the whole spectrum of human rights for all. In this sense, we attach great importance to the Community of Democracies (CD), the Third Ministerial Conference of which will be held in Santiago on 28-30 April this year. The Republic of Korea, as the host country of the Second Ministerial Conference, fully participates in and supports the activities of the CD. We have no doubt that this international process constitutes a significant contribution to the

promotion of democracy at the domestic, regional and global levels. The Government of the Republic of Korea has made it a priority to encourage and institutionalize the full participation of the people in the political process. With the increasing role of civil society in Korea, respect for human rights and other democratic values has assumed greater importance in every aspect of political life in Korea in recent times.

We are convinced that respect for freedom and human dignity is essential for bringing about full-fledged democracy and peaceful change. With this firm conviction, the Republic of Korea strongly upholds the universal values of freedom and human rights as the very cornerstone of its long-term foreign policy goals. We are as determined as ever to spare no efforts in raising human rights standards, taking further strides forward in putting them into practice.

Thank you