

Committee on Social Development, Fifth Session

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Thank you Mr. Chair,

'No one behind' is a clear message at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs can not be fully achieved without tackling inequalities and vulnerabilities of the most marginalized groups such as older persons, persons with disabilities, and migrant people.

As the Secretariat's report(ESCAP/CSD/2018/2) rightly highlighted, universal social protection is a powerful development policy tool for breaking the cycle of poverty for those further behind but also for protecting the vulnerable from falling into poverty. With the full understanding of the importance of social protection, the Republic of Korea has been strengthening social protection mechanism, under the government vision of an "inclusive welfare state" where everyone thrives as follows;

First, the Korean government has expanded the coverage of primary public assistance program named Basic Livelihood Security Program, by gradually relaxing the eligibility criteria. Also, the design of income security programs has been improved to better reflect the needs of individuals through the life-course. Specifically, we have raised the level of pension benefit for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and introduced monthly child benefit. In addition, we have significantly expanded child care assistance and medical coverage, while strengthening housing support for youths, newly-wed couples, and working families. We expect that such inclusive welfare policies will raise household disposable income, thereby creating a virtuous cycle of welfare, growth and jobs.

Secondly, facing unprecedented challenge of rapidly aging population, Korea has established a comprehensive and multi-dimensional policy framework on aging to pro-actively tackle problems associated with aging through the life-course approach. Our government strives to enhance all aspects of life from health and safety to economic participation and leisure. To this end, we have expanded national health insurance benefit package and promoted prevention-focused health management. Among others, the national dementia initiative has been launched under the strong leadership of the

government, in order to reduce burden for older dementia patients and their families. Additionally, we have raised the level of Basic Pension benefit, expanded job programs to increase elderly employment, and raised pay for public jobs which hire a large number of older persons.

To enhance gender equality, through the "5-year Basic Plan for Gender Equality Policy," the focus has been laid on the enhancement of women's participation in policy-making process, which will be followed by the business sectors. For example, the number of women in the higher government officials's position increased from 9.3% in 2012 to 14.8% last year, and women's participation rates for the government committee also increased from 25.7% in 2012 to 40.2% last year.

Mr. Chair,

Korea is also working diligently at the regional level to empower those vulnerable groups. To address older persons' access to healthcare, Korea has been supporting the project of using ICT to enhance accessibility of health care for older persons. Also, Korea deeply involved in the Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI) to provide comprehensive and integrated ICT training programme to women entrepreneurs. In addition, the Korea's cooperation with ESCAP on welfare for persons with disabilities has been vibrant under the Incheon Strategy and Beijing Action Plan, in particular, for member States' capacity building to collect quality disability data for the Incheon Strategy indicators.

Mr. Chair,

Despite much progress made, Still we have a lot left to do together for achieving SDGs within 2030. I would like to reaffirm our government's commitment to inclusive development where no one left behind, and to express it's willing to cooperate continuously and closely with the Commission in the area of social development, in particular for the issues of vulnerable groups of people.

Thank you.