



# THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

335 East 45<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, N.Y. 10017  
Tel (212) 439-4000, Fax (212) 986-1083

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**Statement by Mr. Chang, Jae-bok**

**Director, Human Rights and Social Affairs Division**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

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**On agenda item 3(a) "Priority theme: Social Integration"**

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Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

1. On behalf of my delegation, allow me to extend to you and the other members of the bureau our sincere congratulations on your election. I would like to assure you of our full support and cooperation throughout the 47th Session of the Commission for Social Development.

Mr. Chairman,

2. Undeniably, the integration of world economy has brought humankind unprecedented wealth and prosperity. However, we cannot deny also the fact that we are increasingly witnessing the misfortune of the socially excluded who are denied the access to economic activities or find themselves lagging behind in the fierce competition. The current global situation illustrates clearly that it is socially and economically marginalized and vulnerable groups that are hit hardest by the economic slowdown following a global financial crisis.

3. It has now become the inescapable task of many countries to meet the dual challenges of sustaining their economic growth and reaching out to the socially marginalized groups to enhance social integration, which is the priority theme of this Session. I believe that it is vital that all Governments show a determination and will to ensure that we turn this time of crisis into one of opportunity to lay the groundwork for the building of societies of greater social inclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Secretary-General's Report, entitled "Promoting Social Integration," rightly points out that the labor market is the weakest link between the marginalized groups and mainstream society. In order to achieve enhanced integration of society, there is a need to provide encouragement and support for the most vulnerable groups to be included in the labor market on an equal footing with others, and thus, play a full part in their communities and societies.

5. Particular attention should be paid to the promotion of employment of persons with disabilities and older persons, who are the most vulnerable to social and economic exclusion. It is important that, through inclusion in the labor market, they maintain strong bonds with their society. In this regard, the Korean Government introduced the "Disability Discrimination Prohibition Act" and ratified the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" last year, which is expected to contribute to the prevention of discrimination against persons with disabilities in terms of employment. In order to promote the employment of the aged, the Korean Government is actively providing job placement and skills development services that are designed to suit the needs of the aged. We also introduced the "Age Discrimination Prohibition Act" to address discrimination based on age in employment.

6. Another key issue which warrants sustained efforts and measures to address is that of promoting the participation of women in the labor market. For many female workers in Korea, who take on many of the responsibilities in household work, striking the balance between work and family life is a significant factor in continuing their careers. In this regard, the Korean Government is implementing the 4th Basic Plan for Equal Employment and Work-Family Life Reconciliation, a comprehensive package of measures to promote women's participation in the labor market. The Plan comprises expanding employment opportunities

for women, reducing the child-care burden on working mothers and establishing work systems which enable people to find a harmony between their work and family life.

7. As noted in the Secretary-General's Report, lack of opportunities for decent work makes it difficult for people to be fully integrated into a society. This is particularly the case for young people, who are more likely to find employment in unstable conditions or get jobs with relatively poor working conditions. In Korea, the number of non-regular workers has been rising continuously, and it now accounts for 24% of the total workforce. With a view to addressing this issue, we introduced the Non-Regular Workers Protection Law in 2007, which aims to improve the working conditions of non-regular workers. We have also been carrying out such measures as expanding the social safety net and the preferential provision of training in vocational skills.

Mr. Chairman,

8. In times of economic crisis, when the poorest people in society face even greater financial difficulties, the governments has an even more important role to play in protecting the poor and providing them with adequate assistance. There is therefore a need for well-designed social protection programme to address the vulnerability and facilitate the building of an inclusive society.

9. The Korean Government is planning to expand the micro-credit programme so that people, who are experiencing economic hardships but are unable to offer security for a private loan, can have access to funds to create their own business or maintain their households. In addition, with the revision of the "Emergency Welfare Provision Act", we are planning to expand the eligibility for and access to emergency welfare and provide the recipients with training services in addition to healthcare services.

10. The urgency and necessity of protection for the poor and underprivileged requires governments to act swiftly and proactively to identify the needs of the poor and render assistance to them. We established the Bureau of Livelihood Security Support in the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Family Affairs to monitor and assist people facing a dire situation. In addition, the Korean Government plans to set up the Presidential Committee on Social Integration in the very near future. It will be tasked with drawing up the national plan

for the protection of marginalized people who have difficulty in coping with the competitiveness in the market.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 proclaimed the purpose of social development and social integration as the creation of "a society for all." In the midst of the global financial crisis, when those people who are marginalized in society suffer even greater economic difficulties, there is a need to give serious thought to how to make concerted efforts to reduce social exclusion and move towards a more inclusive society for all. I look forward to this session providing an opportunity for us to pool our wisdom and experience as we pull together to overcome the current crisis and achieve a society of greater integration.

Thank you.