



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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

Statement by SOHN, Sung-youn

First Secretary

Fifth Committee of the 66th Session of the General Assembly

Item : Standards of Accommodation for Air Travel(A/66/676)

15 March 2012

New York

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset, since this is the first time I take the floor at this first resumed session, let me assure you my full support for your chairmanship. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Assistant Secretary General Warren Sach for introducing Secretary-General's report. I also wish to thank Mr. Collen Kelapile, Chairperson of the ACABQ, for presenting his very informative overview of the Air Travel issue.

Mr. Chairman,

2. During the last session, it has been repeatedly stressed that all Member States are suffering from ongoing, unprecedented economic crisis. It has been also stressed that, under these austere conditions, the United Nations needs to enhance the effective and efficient utilization of resources. On the same note, Secretary-General introduced the spirit of “Doing More With Less” as a part of United Nation’s effort on reform. In this regard, my delegation welcomes and supports the initiatives that the Secretary-General laid out in his report on air travel. In particular, we concur with his proposals on 1) discontinuing the application of the 9-hour rule on consultants, individual contractors, and trainees, 2) discontinuing the payment of in-flight daily subsistence allowance, and 3) instructing staff not to use frequent flyer miles accrued as a result of official travel for personal travel, among others. We believe that these are heading towards the right direction.
3. At the same time, in as much as we support the effort of reducing the overall air travel expense of the UN, we believe that these efforts should not seriously hamper the productivity and effectiveness nor the morale of the UN staff. In this regard, we should take a balanced approach, deliberating to find a win-win solution for both the member states and UN staff.
4. In order to do this, my delegation concurs with the ACABQ that the Secretary-General’s report still needs to provide more data on which we could base our decision. As ACABQ has pointed out, additional study must be undertaken on the cost savings, and the impact on productivity and effective mandate implementation. In addition, we call for further examination on the air travel practices and travel standards of major member states representing different levels of economic development, and other comparable international organizations.

Mr. Chairman,

5. To conclude, my delegation, together with the interested delegations, will engage itself constructively in the informal discussion on this agenda, based on the comments today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.