

2. Rural Development

Thank you, Madame Chair.

I would like to thank the panelists for their comprehensive presentation.

Madame Chair

The challenge of rural poverty reduction should be considered in conjunction with human resources and cooperative efforts between rural people and government. In this regard, my delegation would like to introduce my country's experience with our "Saemaul Movement", which means "New Village Movement" to advance rural development.

During the 1970s, the Korean government initiated various programs to improve rural living conditions. The most extensive of these was the Saemaul Movement. Its goal was to mobilize rural people to be self-sufficient. At first, Saemaul projects were aimed at improving household living conditions. Later, projects were directed more to the village as a whole and included the construction of roads, bridges, irrigation ditches, and common compost plots with government assistance.

Through participation of the movement, the rural people improved the village environment through their own cooperative efforts. Furthermore, the movement empowered rural women by engaging them actively in the rural development project. Thanks to its success of the movement, Korea was able to effectively eradicate rural poverty. And now, Korea is reaching out to other countries to provide necessary education and training.

Madame Chair

From our experience, we could learn some lessons. First, cooperative effort between government and rural people is of the utmost importance for the success of rural development policy. Second, to sustain rural development, it is critical to make rural people confident of their ability to improve the living condition and to advance rural development.

Madame Chair

My delegation believes that rural development needs to be mainstreamed into national development frameworks to improve the quality of rural life. For this purpose, the Republic of Korea enacted the Special Act on the Elevation of Life Quality of Farmers, Foresters, and Fishermen and the Promotion of Development of Agricultural, Mountain, and Fishery Areas in 2004. The five-year action plan was established the following year. With more than a 20 billion dollar budget, comprehensive and systematic policies for rural education and infrastructure were put in place.

Madame Chair

On a final note, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of the participatory process in designing and implementing rural development policies. To ensure that rural development will be of substantial benefit to rural people, policy making process for advancing rural development should be participatory and involve all stakeholders in its implementation. Participation of local communities and indigenous groups in decision-making process can incorporate traditional and indigenous knowledge on ecosystem conservation into rural development policies. The participatory process helps ensure that natural resources are utilized in a sustainable manner.

Thank you.