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9-11 October 2007
Macao, China

Country Report

*Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

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**REPORT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

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CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Second World Assembly on Ageing held in Madrid, April 2002 was of great significance in coping with the ageing issue on a world-wide scale by strengthening the care for older persons and facilitating international exchanges and cooperation.

Care for older persons has been regarded as one of the important aspects of the state policy in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The state has a full responsibility for the life of entire people and takes special care of the health and life of the older persons.

Besides, the state is endeavoring to develop international cooperation and exchanges in this field.

1) NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR CARING OLDER PERSONS

The government established non-standing Care of the Aged Committees under the Cabinet and the People's Committees on provincial, county and district levels as the national system for caring older persons and the standing bodies were also organized at various levels to carry out the practical work of the non-standing Care for the Aged Committees.

The Korean Federation for Care of the Aged (KFCA) was established as the central standing organ to carry out the practical work of the

non-standing National Care of the Aged Committee just under the Cabinet, and is organizing and implementing the work and activities on the national scale, getting in touch with the relevant ministries and Central organs as well as the Care of the Aged Committees at every level.

Above all, KFCA submits suggestions concerning with the issues caused by the population ageing to the Cabinet as well as the relevant ministries and central organs so that those suggestions could be considered and correctly reflected in national policy-making process.

And it conducts the research work regarding the population ageing and care for older persons in the country, the proper socio-economic measures to be taken as well as the IME activities to improve social awareness of the older persons and contribute to the care for older persons.

KFCA has also involved in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the regulations and rules related to the care for older persons.

2) SOCIAL POLICY AND LAWFUL FOUNDATION FOR CARING THE OLDER PERSONS

From the first day of its foundation, the government of the Republic has enforced the policy in which the state is responsible for the life of the older persons with no caregivers, and the national systems of social insurance and security has further developed and strengthened, in keeping with the demands of the times and the developing realities.

Under the national social security system, pension and subsidy are

being provided by the state to the men aged 60+ and women 55+ on the basis of their service years and merits, and food supply is prioritized for the older persons so that they can lead their life with no worry.

The state is paying variety of subsidy to the older persons and their care givers.

The living allowances are paid by the state to the older persons with special care needs such as those without children or caregivers, and those over 90 are being given subsidy specially fixed by the state apart from their pension.

Also, social policies such as the universal free medical care, social security and recuperation service are further developed in keeping with the demands of the developing realities.

Recently the work is being accelerated in the context of rapid increase of the older population due to the decrease of fertility and the increase of life expectancy.

In particular, on 26 April, 2007 the Law of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the Care of the Elderly was adopted, which has led to establishing the lawful framework for caring older persons.

This Law consists of 47 articles with 6 chapters which are "Fundamentals of the Elderly Care", "Support of the Elderly", "Health Service to the Elderly", "Cultural and Emotional life of the Elderly", "Social Activities of the Elderly" and "Guidance and Control over Caring for the Elderly".

3) SOCIAL VIEW AND PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

OF THE OLDER PERSONS, THEIR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

In the DPRK, the elderly are regarded as the forerunners who devoted their lives to the rising generation and to respect them as an obligation as well as lofty moral duty of the rising generation, and the state is paying its primary attention to the promotion of the traditional virtue of revering the elderly.

The elderly are regarded as the former generation, revolutionary forerunners, seniors of the society, and heads of their families who devoted their talents and enthusiasm to the stable development of the state and the society as well as to the creation of the economic and cultural wealth.

Administrative, commercial, transport and other service organs are encouraged to respect the elderly by fixing and introducing “Day for Service to Seniors”, “Place for Seniors” and “Delivery Service”.

Model deeds are widely introduced and publicized for care of the elderly through the mass media such as newspaper, TV and radio.

In the DPRK, participation of the elderly into the social activities is the work for the elderly to hand over lofty spirit and experience of struggle, national culture and custom to the coming generations, and thus contribute to the society with their own knowledge and ability.

Actually, many seniors are working in various positions with their skillful technology and talents, experiences of working activities especially in the sectors of Science & Research, Literature & Art, etc. if they have ability and wish to continue to work, and thus giving benefits to the state and society.

More and more seniors are contributing to the development of the

society as consultants, researchers or translators in their former work stations even though they are well over their working ages.

4) HEALTH CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS

Health care becomes of an important aspect in caring older persons in DPRK whose principle of its activities is that man is the most precious and everything should be taken into account for the well-being of the people.

Elderly health care is being carried out by the system of the universal free medical service and the well-built health infrastructures from the central to the grass root levels.

Section doctors are delivering the primary health care for the seniors of their rounds and special geriatric service and geriatric research work are being done in the geriatric departments of Provincial hospitals and the Geriatric Hospital in Korean Red-Cross General Hospital.

Also, tonics, nutritional and healthy foods necessary for older persons are produced in pharmaceutical and foodstuff factories, which contribute to their health.

5) SUPPORT OF THE ELDERLY

The support to the elderly in DPRK is lawfully guaranteed by the Law of DPRK on Care of the Elderly.

The Article 8, Chapter 2 of the Law reads as follows;

“The state shall ensure that state support and family support are

combined for the elderly.

Organs, enterprises, institutions and citizens shall regard support of the elderly as an element of their moral standards and rules of conduct to be observed in society and human life.”

Elderly support is now mainly relied upon the family support in DPRK.

Caregivers of the elderly are taking good care of the elderly with their spiritual and material assistance so that the elderly will live long healthily and comfortably in the country where respecting and care-giving for parents and seniors are regarded as traditional custom of the nation.

In DPRK, people love and believe each other, and a great deal of beautiful deeds are displayed that more and more people are taking good care of the childless elderly, regarding them like their real parents in order for them to lead their life with good health.

The state is operating the Older People’s Homes at various levels where the elderly who have no family members or want to get an institutional care reside to enjoy the benefits of the State

The government of the DPRK will hopefully further the cooperation and exchanges with UNESCAP, UNFPA and other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the organizations related to the ageing in other countries in order to promote the development of the care for older persons.