

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

335 East 45th Street, New York, NY, 10017

Tel 212 439 4000 Fax 212 986 1083

Statement by Youth delegate SuHi Choi

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Mr. Chairman, honorable delegates, distinguished fellow youth delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Young people are the mirror of its nation's future. The current status of our young generation reflects the future of our world. Today, the world acknowledges youth as the key asset for social development and integration, for it is the young members of society who preserve flexibility and ease of adaptation to rapid social and cultural changes and technological development.

Guiding these young people to grow as future mainstream citizens is a responsibility and duty of society. I believe that appreciating the value of the potential and energy of youth, and offering youth opportunities to participate in society to release their energy, may be an effective method. Therefore, I would like to share with you three ideas to promote youth activity.

First, increase participation of youth in decision-making processes. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, young people have the right to participate in the policy making process regarding the youth policy agenda. The youth, as equal citizens, can practice their rights in the decision-making process on matters that concern and influence their lives.

In Korea, young people take part in the formal decision-making process through youth organizations. One of the major organizations is the Youth Special Congress. It is an organization where representative youths selected from regions across the country discuss and suggest youth policies. Almost 100 Korean youth representatives gather face to face to involve in open discussions, producing many ideas regarding youth agenda, and submit resolutions directly to the government annually.

Moreover, the development of Internet Communication Technology (ICT) allows more young people to express their opinions and add their voices via cyber networks, extending the empowerment of youth communities than ever before. However, since

many online youth communities are treated as informal, it provides little or no influence on the practice of formal decision-making. Hence, youth policy making processes must be restructured to meet the level of young people by adopting ICT methods. This would enable the youth to have more influence over youth policies, and at the same time fulfill their social responsibility as young citizens.

Second, encourage participation of youth in social activities. By participating in social activities, young people gain access to open opportunities to explore, investigate, and proactively integrate with the community they live in. Moreover, youth participation not only serves as an effective citizenship curriculum, but also allows them to be more aware of public affairs, elements which mature young participants of society to prepare themselves as future frontiers.

Young people in Korea are encouraged to participate in volunteer work to learn about the hardships of their neighbors, become aware of what it is like to live with others in a community, and use it as an opportunity for personal growth, to become future mainstream citizens. To encourage youth social participation, the Korean government provides an Internet-based service for youth to easily participate in volunteer activities by visiting the official website called DoVol.Net, containing a reliable database on volunteer networks and information, which makes it easier to search and apply for volunteer activities.

Third, promote participation of youth in the labor market. In order to support young adults to take their first steps into society, employment support policies must be promoted. Rights of youth and employment policies may seem irrelevant. However, in terms of youth participation, employment means strengthening social authority and financial autonomy by taking part in the economy. Nevertheless, as the recession drags on, young job hunters suffer from economic limbo, not being able to find decent work. This may lead to desperate situations where unemployed young adults resort to illicit activities in order to survive.

The Korean government recognizes such issues and supports youth employment policies more than ever before. It announced an off-campus career competence program for undergraduate job seekers based on academic-industrial cooperation. Moreover, job experience training and intergovernmental programs such as international internships are given financial support. Furthermore, to enhance working conditions, in particular for temporary workers, Korea's Ministry of Labor organized a "1318 campaign" which provides preventive and restorative protection of labor rights through counseling and education, in order to proliferate better working conditions for young workers.

Mr. Chairman,

I feel that it is the responsibility and duty of the society to safely deliver the dream and hopes of today's youth towards the future. Cooperation between UN member states in proliferating youth participation would surely generate a youth-friendly environment. A youth-friendly society not only benefits young people, but also promises a positive influence on the nation and the world in the future. I have no doubt that encouraging youths as contributing members of society would ensure better social integration and development for our future.

Thank you.