

Mr. Chairman, honorable delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is one of the most honorable moments for me to be present here as a female youth delegate of my country to the UN General Assembly, and I feel a solemn sense of responsibility and honor to represent over 10 million youths of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Chairman, we live in the world confronted with unprecedented challenges, which threaten the security and wellbeing of the most vulnerable within society, the women. I'd like to suggest some solutions, focusing on three main topics of World Programme of Action for Youth; the environment, employment, and the empowerment of girls and young women.

Environmental degradation increasingly threatens the women's lives. The climate change issue will be discussed at the coming December Copenhagen meeting. In the course for seeking fundamental and comprehensive solutions to address these issues, we should focus on potential of women's leadership and active participation in this field. In this regard, I would like to encourage that gender consideration be included in the climate change agreement in December in a manner that guarantees the participation of women in decision-making on climate change.

Currently, the world experiences the 'Global Financial Crisis.' Its impact has put most of MDG targets at risk of becoming a lost cause; one of the most affected being Goal 3, achieving gender equality, in the labor market. With the estimated global unemployment rate hovering around 7 percent, the effect is expected to be worse for women, who not only face the higher unemployment rate projection, but also the higher vulnerability of losing industries and services where they can practice a decent profession.

Recognizing the dilemma of women in striking a balance between family life and a professional career, the Korean government has introduced the 4th Basic Plan for Equal Employment and Work-Family Life Reconciliation, to promote women's employment and effectively help them handle their responsibilities for managing their work in sync with family life. Also, it has designated 50 support organizations as the New Occupation Center for Women (NOCW) to provide the One-Stop overall employment support service for women, who have stopped working due to childcare or family support concerns, in order to help them regain decent employment and restart their careers.

However, more needs to be done in order to help the estimated 10 to 22 million women on the brink of unemployment by the end of 2009. We must prevent the crisis from evolving into a more serious one, causing the rising number of women to engage in either unpaid or unstable jobs and have their already lower wages cut even more.

Mr. Chairman, the challenges that lie ahead of us today seem rather imposing and insurmountable. However, history tells us that human development lies in not remembering the past mistakes, but taking the responsibility for our future generations. In due respect to this solemn fact, I strongly urge all member states of the United Nations to integrate the voice of youths in their delegations to effectively respond to the voice of children and women. Let us, the youth, stand as the conscience of this generation.

Thank you..