

UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (Item 3: General Exchange of Views)

Statement by Mr. Kwang-heon Doh, Counsellor

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Thank you, Co-Chairs,

I would like to first express my sincere appreciation to you and the Secretariat for arranging this meeting on the important issue of “Sea-level rise and its impacts” especially given the pandemic situation. This was a very timely topic in 2019, and the issue has taken on even more relevance since then. It requires a substantial and sustained response from the international community that reflects a sense of urgency.

Sea-level rise has posed an existential threat to humankind affecting various aspects of our life, including decreasing biodiversity and deteriorating the living conditions of coastal areas. Greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, and their impacts on oceans have caused a sea-level rise as well as increasing ocean water temperatures and ocean acidification.

The pressing challenges posed by this issue do not only apply to island or archipelagic nations. These challenges must be dealt with by every country. Substantial and tangible success will only be possible through the active participation of all stakeholders addressing all aspects of the issue, including biodiversity, oceans, and climate change, among others. Furthermore, rising sea levels, which are taking place within the larger context of climate change,

should be tackled globally.

Co-Chairs,

In this regard, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks for the enormous interest shown in the 2021 P4G Seoul Summit held last month. Building on the Summit's momentum, we gathered the world's insights for the "Inclusive Green Recovery towards Carbon Neutrality" and adopted the "Seoul Declaration", which expressed the international community's concerted willingness for climate action.

My delegation is honoured to share our endeavours in this regard. Among its various efforts, the Republic of Korea declared the 2050 Carbon Neutrality goal in 2020 and the Peace Forest Initiative in 2019. In addition we will increase climate- and green-related ODA to help developing countries in need of a green recovery and raise a US\$5 million Green New Deal Trust Fund through the Global Green Growth Institute.

Co-Chairs,

We also need to pay due attention to the marine environment in addressing the issue of sea-level rise. These current issues are among the many harmful side-effects of human activities such as marine plastic pollution and disposal of waste and polluted materials into the ocean. After the natural environment has been damaged by us, it is difficult to restore it, especially the marine environment due to the transboundary nature of the ocean. Therefore, we need to take a precautionary and transparent approach in addressing environmental

issues based on international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Bearing in mind all of the above, we will continue to make the utmost effort to solve this issue.

I thank you, Co-Chairs.

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