

**THE 43rd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude for this valuable opportunity to engage in this discussion on the pressing issues of our times, with special focus on the links between health, morbidity, mortality, and development. My delegation expects, through this session of the Commission, to engage in an in-depth analysis on population trends and their implications on development policies.

The international community is facing unprecedented demographic changes as a result of decreasing mortality, increasing life expectancies, and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases. These trends call upon countries to scale-up their efforts to protect the most vulnerable segments of the population, including senior citizens, who are more prone to disease and have less means to both prevent and treat it. In this regard, my delegation would like to share our recent health and support policies geared towards improving the lives of seniors.

Mr. Chair,

During the last ten years, declining mortality in my country has led to a rapid increase of life expectancy, reaching 79.6 years in 2007. As a result of lowering mortality and low fertility rates, 11.0% of the total population in the Republic of Korea (approximately 5.3 million persons) are age 65 or over as of this year. This proportion is expected to nearly double, reaching 20.0% by 2026.

In recognition of the severity of rapidly aging population issues, the Government of the Republic of Korea has undertaken various legislative and administrative measures, including the *Basic Law on Low Fertility and Aged Society*, enacted in September 2005, and the Five-year Plan for Aging Society and Population Policy (2006-2010).

As a part of these measures, efforts to improve primary health care and the long-term management of chronic conditions have been introduced for tackling multiple challenges that older persons face. Specifically, we have already implemented a policy

promoting testing designed for early detection of cancer, the leading cause of death in my country. We have also prioritized accessibility to a comprehensive care system for seniors with geriatric diseases such as dementia.

Beyond health care, my government has initiated a number of support policies for senior citizens. Employment service centers have been established to promote employment of seniors and provide them with job placement services, free of charge. Furthermore, various programs for making good use of their leisure time have been introduced such as opportunities to participate in community service or voluntary work initiatives.

Mr. Chair,

As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) specify, improving health service and reducing mortality is a major target of development goals. In this light, my delegation would like to emphasize that preventive measures through health care and a social security system are crucial for preparing for such drastic changes in population structures caused by fertility, mortality, and health.

From our experience with the world's fastest aging population and incorporating today's discussion on universal demographic trends, my delegation believes that scaling-up interventions by governments are required in order to ensure a healthier and more stable environment for all populations. To this end, the international community should strengthen collaboration and increase cooperation efforts with a view to providing more equitable and effective care to vulnerable groups, including seniors.

My government will continue to strive to address the challenges of demographic shifts with special attention to our aging population and fulfillment of their needs. I would also like to reaffirm our faithful commitment towards the implementation of internationally agreed upon development goals, including the MDGs and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging, and working closely with the international community to this end.

Thank you.