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Statement by Amb. Hyunjoo Oh (Deputy Permanent Representative)
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (Agenda item 86)
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Mr./Madame Chair,

Rule of law is a fundamental principle that upholds the three pillars of the UN's work, namely, peace and security, development, and human rights. It helps us to create a stable international order and establish good governance, which underpins a solid foundation for economic development and inclusive societies where no one is left behind.

The Republic of Korea believes that without justice and strong institutions, we simply cannot accomplish sustainable development and enduring peace.

Mr./Madame Chair,

SDG 16 remains highly relevant in times of crisis, including the current COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic reminds us of the importance of inclusive and resilient societies. While we strive to flatten the curve and aim for a post-COVID-19 recovery, we should not disregard our common goal of promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, which are the key elements of SDG 16.

SDG16 aims to protect the most vulnerable groups, who were also hit hardest by the current pandemic. Insecurity, weak institutions, and limited access to justice will not only aggravate the situation, but even go much further as to undermine public trust in entire societies.

In this regard, today's subtopic, "Measures to prevent and combat corruption," deserves proper attention. Corruption causes disruptions across various sectors including government, industry, finance, education, public health, and even sports. The Republic of Korea believes that anti-corruption helps all components of our society to function well.

My Government attaches great importance to enhancing transparency, fairness, and accountability in our society, and is committed to implementing its obligations under the UN Convention against Corruption. Our domestic efforts include effective legislation and policies in order to prohibit illegal solicitation and protect whistleblowers, as well as to curb illegal financial transactions.

With evolving techniques and digitalization, corruption has become more sophisticated and global. As such, we should stay vigilant and continue exchanging information and experiences with each other. The Republic of Korea signed eight MOUs on anti-corruption cooperation with other Member States, and provided technical assistances and training programs for States in need of capacity-building. In particular, the Republic of Korea will host the 19th International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) virtually in December this year.

The UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) against Corruption in 2021 will serve as a great opportunity to reassure our collective will and mobilize resources. We look forward to achieving meaningful outcomes at UNGASS.

Mr./Madame Chair,

My delegation believes that the core principles of democracy and the rule of law should guide our way out of the challenges we are currently facing. From the very beginning of the pandemic, my Government has forged a policy based on the principles of openness, transparency, civic participation, and innovativeness.

Instead of closing our borders, we kept them as open as possible for essential international travel. We have fully shared our information and experience with the global community, and extended material and knowledge assistance to others. Furthermore, the Republic of Korea was among the first countries which held a national vote even in the midst of the pandemic.

As the global pandemic revealed the weakest links in our chain, we need to ensure their resilience before further challenges emerge. In this regard, we support the ongoing global efforts to strengthen normative regime such as the International Health Regulations (2005). Much more needs to be done in order to enhance the rules-based order and protect human rights, while facilitating essential cross-border movement of people. We need to invest more efforts to identify gaps and the areas of further cooperation.

From the normative perspective, the International Law Commission (ILC) has a great role to play. The Republic of Korea looks forward to further contributions from the ILC for the progressive development of international law and its codification.

Once again, my delegation would like to express our strong commitment to promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. We will continue to be actively engaged to this end.

Thank you. /End/