

**State under Review: Republic of Korea**

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## **1. Freedom of Opinion and Expression**

Republic of Korea (ROK) has been urged by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, the UN Human Rights Committee, and many non-governmental organizations to abolish or substantially amend the National Security Law in order to bring it into line with international legal standards. In compliance with the recommendations and/or conclusions, as well as its voluntary commitments and its replies presented during the interactive discussion in the session, specific modalities for the implementation or amendment for the following will be made: the National Security Law, the Criminal Defamation Law, restrictions on women's reproductive rights, and sex education in schools.

## **2. Human Trafficking**

Second, in pursuance of the recommendations suggested by fellow states, the ROK has reviewed its current measures against human trafficking. ROK is wholeheartedly dedicated to expanding the scope of the existing legislations in order to criminalize all forms of human trafficking. Particularly, amending the Criminal Act to better abide by the provisions of Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons shall be in the interests of ROK. Moreover, labor exploitation, sex trafficking, or the acquisition of organs will be the prime focus of ROK, and core treaties and their underlying principles, regardless of ROK's ratification of such treaties, will serve as the guide for ROK's movement towards eradication of the crime.

## **3. Right of the Children**

The ROK also agrees that universal birth registration could protect the unregistered children living in this state. However, in the ROK, there is a concern that this universal birth registration could rather jeopardize the health of both mother and infant. If it becomes mandatory for the hospital to register right after the birth, regardless of the willingness of the mothers, those mothers who do not want their delivery to be recorded would try to give birth at places other than the hospital. As such concern exists, the ROK would take careful steps in implementing the universal birth registration. We will gradually move on to the level of universal birth registration by keep implementing several complementary measures mentioned in the former national report in order to minimize any side effect.

## **4. Environment**

The ROK has been questioned for their efforts for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes by the UN Special Rapporteur, along with the recognition of the links between human rights and the environment that has greatly increased in recent years. In accordance to the recommendations and conclusions

provided, the Government of the ROK would like to assure of its continuous support for the Special Rapporteur of his mandate in order to protect different stakeholders ranging from consumers, workers, children and also communities - whoever that is likely to be affected by the hazardous substances in the product consumption process. In order to incorporate a right to a healthy environment in their constitutions, ROK will ensure with the Government's effort into introducing the approval and authorization systems for biocidal substances and the products, so that only safe products can be placed on the market for the sake of the sustainable environment, and promote best practices relating to the use of human rights in environmental policymaking.

## **5. Gender Inequality and Violence**

Finally, ROK accepts to increase the actual law effectiveness by strengthening its policies regarding gender inequality and violence. It is working on, and will continue ensuring greater representation of women in the public sector by increasing women politician ratio. Moreover, the number of counseling per center in average has been increasing over the past 8 years, implying the increase in gender equality awareness in this country. Furthermore, ROK will strengthen mandatory prevention education on sexual harassment in companies and increase public campaigns in order to improve people's awareness on gender inequality and violence.