Agenda 2: Consideration of the Action Plan to strengthen regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific

Thank you, Madam Chair.
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by joining others in congratulating Her Excellency Samantha K. Jayasuria on her election as the Chair of the Sixth Session of the Committee on Social Development. We look forward to your good and able leadership.

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Korean delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to the ESCAP Secretariat for the drive to develop this action plan to strengthen regional cooperation on social protection in our region.

It will indeed be a great inspiration to all Members States in realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and our collective vision of “leaving no one behind”. In this regard, I would like to share our country’s efforts on some priority areas linked to the Action Plan:

[국민 모두가 함께 잘사는 포용적 복지사회 비전]

Over years, the Korean government has implemented a variety of social protection policies with a goal of an inclusive welfare state, ensuring the basic standard of living and raising the overall quality of life for all citizens.
Specifically, the “National Basic Livelihood Security Program” is the core public assistance program for the poor. In order to ensure the national minimum living standards for all people, the coverage level of the program has been consistently improved. And with a view that social security measures should reflect the real conditions of the people, the strict eligibility standard on caregivers has been phased out as many have pointed out that it reduces the chance of people in need of assistance becoming beneficiaries.

For vulnerable population groups such as the elderly and the disabled, the Korean government is providing a solid base of stable livelihood by gradually increasing the level of basic pension benefits of the Basic Old-Age Pension and the Disability Pension.

In support of children’s healthy development, the Korean government shoulders more responsibility in child rearing by continuously expanding the coverage of child allowance which was introduced in 2018. From 2020, children under seven would also be eligible, which is expected to increase the benefit target from 2.47 million to 2.63 million kids.

Furthermore, the ‘Community Care Program’ provides integrated support for housing, medical treatment, daycare and independent livelihood in order to let those in need of care such as the elderly and people with disability receive proper social service in their local community.
Lastly, with the recent ongoing need for a more comprehensive system to support income and care in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Korean government will bolster the social security net, making it much more inclusive by introducing the sickness benefit through the K-New Deal Plan.

In this context, the Korean delegation would like to propose some amendments in Article 22(g) (1),(2),(3) / ‘by sex and age’. To include various vulnerable groups in addition to sex and age, it would be more appropriate to adopt the original text from the ‘Indicator framework of Sustainable Development Goal 1.3.1.’, which is ‘by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant woman, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable’.

Madam Chair,

We are now dealing with a global socio-economic crisis represented by the economic recession from the COVID-19 pandemic, and labor market restructuring due to the fourth industrial revolution.

The Republic of Korea fully agrees that national governments should take more responsibility for social protection and regional cooperation should be strengthened to tackle the emerging risks and vulnerabilities in our region.

Thank you.