

The Republic of Korea

Positions for the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

I. Eradicating Urban Poverty through Health Policies

The Republic of Korea strongly supports the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the UN Millennium Declaration as created by A/RES/55/2. The Republic of Korea is ready to share its development experience with fellow member states as a country that has overcome poverty through forty years of economic growth and social development. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea Yun Byung-se affirmed the Republic of Korea's enthusiasm to share its development experiences and to contribute to the renewal of partnership. In addition to the Republic of Korea sharing its knowledge with the international community, it will also strive towards poverty and hunger reductions, such as by reducing debt, endorsing investment and trade opportunities, and increasing development assistance to least developed countries (LDCs), as stated in MDG8. The Republic of Korea has already helped underdeveloped countries in Africa and Latin America, through the Republic of Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund. It is the Republic of Korea's goal to spread its knowledge on development through health policies and welcome other member states to join in a global effort to end poverty by placing an emphasis on education, health services, and gender equality. The Republic of Korea further encourages expanding the MDG monitor and assessment framework in order to design effective poverty reduction policies, improve statistical and data accessibility, and keep governments accountable.

The Republic of Korea further calls upon the international community to further their endeavors of educating the general population on health policies, as stated in MDG2. The Republic of Korea is currently educating women in Africa and Latin America about mother and child health and calls for other member states to join in the advancement of women's health programs globally. The Republic of Korea also commits itself to creating an exchange program between member states to train the next generation of medical students in health sectors, building and opening clinics and enforcing MDG health policies. The Republic of Korea is also devoted to educating the international community of HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases. The Republic of Korea promotes the accessibility to education of HIV/AIDS by implementing prevention centers in order to fulfill MDG6. The prevention centers would provide a range of services, including free HIV/AIDS testing and counseling. The Republic of Korea has already taken the initiative of forming a forum with Africa to educate African countries on prevention of HIV/AIDS; however, the Republic of Korea wishes to expand HIV/AIDS and other disease prevention programs to other parts of the world struggling with high disease rates. HIV/AIDS are not the only deadly diseases that need to be treated and monitored, but diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis need awareness as well. The Republic of Korea is reaching out to the international community to educate the general population of these deadly diseases, as well as further laboratory testing to find successful treatments. It is only with the creation of a global medical team, that further medical advancements and hopefully, a cure can be found for these diseases.

People living in urban poverty continue to live in deplorable situations due to unsatisfactory sanitation policies and high amounts of pollution. In an urban setting, a combination of a lack of access to clean water in addition to pollution causes the spread of disease and poverty. The Republic of Korea is taking part in a global effort supported by Agenda 21 by providing its experience as a developed nation to create an international water program to provide clean water access to all nations, as well as push for an international water management system. The global water management system will be in charge of securing water sources, testing water quality and safety, creating irrigation systems, and making systems for flooding control. In July 1996, the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry established policy to reduce pollution and other harmful wastes by improving the agro-environment and farming systems without the use of pesticides. The Republic of Korea looks to maximize the development of agriculture through a global pollution-filtering program. It was the Republic of Korea's 2010 National Strategy for Green Growth that emphasized the importance of educating other nations on moving towards a green transformation. While developing countries face issues of poverty, green economic and health growth will help stabilize poverty rates by using more economically-friendly methods and promoting a healthier lifestyle by giving the international community access to clean air and water. The World Bank estimates over 1 billion of the world's population will still live in poverty in 2015 unless there is a global initiative towards eradicating poverty. For MDG8, the Republic of Korea challenges the international community to come together to promote and advance health policies and health education to eradicate poverty. Poverty scourges and oppresses the citizens of the world, and the eradication of poverty is a "human basic need". Member states should be looking toward the future, as to advance the global effort of promoting health coalitions, monitors and assessments, and educational programs in the "pursuit of global happiness".

II. Rehabilitating Slum Settlements through Urban Development

The Republic of Korea advocates that urban development must be sustainable and fruitful in order to be deemed successful. The Republic of Korea maintains a tradition of innovative urban planning that has spurred life into dying economies. The Republic of Korea firmly supports the use of environmental policy to achieve sustainable development in accordance with the UN Habitat Agenda and Millennium Development Goal 7 Target 11. The Republic of Korea's National Strategy for Green Growth displays their unwavering commitment to combat the adverse effects of urbanization, specifically the issue of climate change recognized in A/RES/66/288 and A/RES/66/207. The Republic of Korea espouses the objectives of the Johannesburg 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and is engaged in the production of twenty-seven green technologies that will increase energy efficiency and boost long run economic growth. The Republic of Korea will achieve a thirty percent decrease in greenhouse emissions by 2020, exceeding the requirements of its non-Annex I Party status within the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Republic of Korea hopes their example will encourage the participation of all nations in the Rio+20 Future We Want. The Republic of Korea recognizes the importance of sanitation as stated in A/RES/67/291 and commits to increasing slum accessibility to water and sewage infrastructure while protecting biodiversity. The Republic of Korea desires the call of A/RES/65/284 for sustainable development in Africa to be accomplished by concentrating slum rehabilitation efforts within the least developed countries first. The Republic of Korea urges the UN-HABITAT committee to host a yearly seminar on green initiatives in the "pursuit of global happiness." Such a seminar would utilize the knowledge of World Friends Korea and the Korean International Cooperation Agency in the production of green technologies to build the regional sustainable capacity of specific urban settlements.

The Republic of Korea recognizes the importance of making slums "inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable" in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11. Over fifty percent of housing in urban areas are illegal settlements spurred by the affordability they offer to low-income dwellers. To address this phenomenon, the Republic of Korea has adopted the "Productive Welfare" national strategy and increasingly promotes the incorporation of subsidized housing and technical assistance within urban policies of the international community. The Republic of Korea enthusiastically integrates the vision of the 2009 Global Jobs Pact to foster "job centered policies", and is a proponent of social dialogue between local and national organizations in the creation of urban policy. The Republic of Korea has pioneered the creation of multi-centered cities that spatially reorganize educational, occupational, and recreational services. The Republic of Korea wishes to see its neighbor nations champion similar new urban policies that will diffuse vehicular pollution, create affordable new housing markets, and increase urban access to sanitary water and sewage infrastructures. The Republic of Korea is committed to the development of various public transport systems, promoting the use of non-motorized vehicles, and creating inclusive slum infrastructures. The Republic of Korea willingly shares its expertise and calls on UN Member nations to prioritize urban policies that are favorable to low-income slum settlements.

The Republic of Korea upholds that slums can be transformed into productive metropolises through four major policy directives. First, large regional trade unions must incorporate small developing nations into their market structures. The Republic of Korea encourages the international community to enact limited tariff policies and universal access to the 116 market items listed by the WTO Ministerial Conference of 1996 to increase the presence of transnational corporations. Second, least developed nations must strengthen the rule of law by granting property rights to the poor in slum settlements. Inclusive membership in regional trade unions and legally recognized assets will foster the creation of new markets among the poor, increase the sustainability and profitability of rural markets, and promote the expansion of existing markets. The third policy directive posits the elimination of looming national debts. The Republic of Korea holds that the cooperation of international institutions such as the Korea Economic Development Fund (EDFC) with local government and urban organizations is necessary for the development of fiscal, monetary, and public policies that can reinvigorate slum settlements. Finally, the international community must strategically invest both technologically and vocationally. The Republic of Korea affirms the findings of the UN System Task Team working group on "Financing for sustainable development" that the "quality of investment is as important as the amount invested." Thus the Republic of Korea strongly supports the creation of an international exchange program that will not only address health policy, but also enrich students with the best practices in business, trade, and manufacturing. The Republic of Korea urges the international community to recognize that investment in the development of green machinery is valuable, but investment in the career development of those who will run the future "machine" of international business and urban policy, will prove invaluable.