

Position Paper for the Human Rights Council

The topics before the Human Rights Council are: Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Areas and Combating Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Cyberspace. The Republic of Korea stresses that technology has nothing to do with your stance in the country. Anyone should equally experience what others receive as well.

I. Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Areas

With intelligent minds and curious beings comes a world that revolves around technology. The growth of technology has made great advances in life but, it has also caused a big rift between the rich and the poor in society. The United Nations General Assembly A/RES/66/184 acknowledges that the Internet is a central element in the infrastructure of the information society and is a global facility available to the public. During the World Summit on the Information Society and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stated that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. Everyone everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers.

The Republic of Korea has made its evolution to a technologically advanced world with the smallest digital divide amidst leading nations. The Republic of Korea has seen that throughout the years it has reached its maximum capability of giving 100% of the population, from ages 19- 34, with technologies of today's world; regardless of their gender, background, stature, income, and place of living. The Republic of Korea started its revolt towards development through technology by 1997 through an arrangement called "high speed information infrastructure project". The country has seen possible restoration from the Asian crisis by making an information society using a public-private-partnership (PPP) framework that used the power of high speed internet. The government developed the "Cyber Korea 21" strategy that centered on internet access through mobile phones. 'e-Korea Vision 2006' proposal had initiated the third generation (3G) wireless technology also known as the first IMT-2000 service in the world. The government later established an annual Digital Divide Index to record the country's digital divide. These mediations opened the opportunity for local citizens to see the growth in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Access and for the Digital Opportunity Index to rank the country as the best in the world. There were difficulties during the first few years of restoration but with the application of 31 e-Government project and over 101 laws executed, the country was able to achieve its intention on bridging the digital divide. The country's triumph in doing these is threefold: (1) the government made it a policy priority which identified the potential of broadband, (2) there is unity between the government and the sectors of the country and (3) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education is important to gain demand in the service.

In order to better bridge the digital divide, the government, thus, should ideally (1) keep citizens educated on technology as it grows by continuing the public-private-partnership (PPP) framework but should not decline one's surrounding. The government (2) should help broadband companies in making swifter internet bandwidth without forgetting its goal of providing the fastest yet the cheapest. The Republic of Korea can (3) invite different foreign companies to invest in the sharing of connection and teach them how the country's internet helped its economic growth. The Republic of Korea strongly believes that anyone has the right to use the cyberspace. Whoever you are, wherever you are and whatever you do, you are entitled to experience the best of the best the internet has to offer.

II. Combating Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Cyberspace

The world today is involved in different kinds of slavery which varies from sexual exploitation, child trafficking, selling wives and even forced labors. Not only does it exist through human interactions but it also occurs online. Children of different ages, even women who are wives are oppressed to engage in these kinds of transactions. The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/20/8 states the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights in the Internet. On the other hand, UNESCO document 37 C/61 commits to the full implementation of human rights in cyberspace and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Republic of Korea, with its notoriety of “Internet Strong Nation”, has been considered strict in terms of cyber security but, a lot of things still surpass its limitations that lead to cyber slavery in the citizens. Prostitution or online sexual exploitation is the most prominent slavery in the country today. With its past on comfort women, so goes its history on prostitution. Not only does online prostitution happen with women, men also partake in this kind of slavery. Thus, the government has made its way on abolishing this cyber slavery through an Anti-Sex Trade Law, passed in 2004, promised the abolition of prostitution and the safety of victims of exploitation and violence in the business. The Anti-Prostitution Law states that people who engage in prostitution activities shall be imprisoned or will be penalized by paying three million won. Brokers on the other hand would have to be kept behind bars for seven years or would have to pay seventy million won. Transactions with minors will face more severe punishment.

The Republic of Korea sees the need to impose new laws on cyber slavery by focusing on the rights of the sex workers. The Republic of Korea strongly believes that revisions of the Anti-Sex Trade Law shall be made that would recognize the view of the citizens in terms of prostitution. The government would conduct quarterly orientations on slavery in the country. The country also needs to create software that would strengthen the security of the cyberspace. The country considers the need of negotiations with other states in continuing and implementing stricter cyber security to protect the rights of the countrymen. No one should be excluded from protection the government has to offer.

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