

General Debate Session 2

Ministerial Segment of the 2016 High Level Political Forum

19th July 2016, 17:00 p.m.

The Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarter, New York

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador. Jong-moon Choi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs,

His Excellency Amb. Frederick Shava,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Chair for successfully preparing for this important meeting.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly defines the world we want. It is a world where no one is left behind in participating in sustainable development, and enjoying its fruits.

However, if we look at the events unfolding around the world, despite the positive progress in the MDGs era, much business still remains unfinished. We are witnessing multiple challenges

in a rapidly changing global context. These range from rising inequalities, a lack of decent work, demographic shifts, humanitarian crises, environmental degradation, epidemics, terrorism, and violent extremism.

Today, I wish to elaborate on two most pressing challenges the global community is confronted with in ensuring that there is no one left behind.

First, rising inequalities. Over the past several decades, income inequality has worsened and global wealth has concentrated in an even smaller number of hands. At present the richest 1% of the world's population owns half of the global wealth, while the bottom half holds just 1% of the world's wealth. Rising inequalities among countries as well as within a country are major obstacles for sustainable development.

Second, humanitarian crisis. Millions across the world suffer from unspeakable tragedies and misery due to prolonged conflicts. The number of people fleeing their homes and countries has increased to a level never before seen. According

to a recent report by the UNHCR, a record-high number of 65.3 million people were displaced worldwide against their will. Environmental anomalies and natural disasters like earthquakes, typhoons, droughts have major consequences across all regions by impeding sustainable development and increasing vulnerability.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, we have already taken important steps in Paris, Brussels, and recently, in Istanbul in creating innovative solutions for new global governance and paradigms. I reassure you that Korea will stand in solidarity with the global community as a reliable partner.

In that context, Korea acknowledges two important meetings that will provide another momentum to crystallize global solidarity. In September, the ‘High-Level Plenary Meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants’ will be held during the 71th General Assembly. It will be followed by ‘the Leaders Summit on Refugees’ which will be hosted by the U.S. Government. Korea will actively participate in these meetings.

Distinguished delegates,

Now, I wish to touch upon Korea's efforts to face the challenges I highlighted earlier: inequalities and humanitarian crises.

First, to tackle inequalities and to ensure that no countries are left behind, Korea concentrates its resources on the countries under the most difficult circumstances. Korea is steadily increasing its support for fragile and conflict-affected states. Especially, we plan to further increase our contribution to Country-Based Pooled Funds established for those countries.

In order to mobilize more resources towards the least developed and fragile states, the Korean government runs an innovative program that collects \$1 per air-tickets departing from Korea and dedicates them to the Global Poverty Eradication Fund. Around 25 million dollars are annually collected and devoted to promoting the health and safety of marginalized populations in the countries facing extreme challenges. By inducing public participation, it also has raised the public awareness of ODA.

Second, Korea puts humanitarian assistance at the top of its agenda and increases its contributions. Providing effective humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable groups in crisis setting, such as refugees, women, and children, is a priority of our government. In line with the “Better Life for Girls” Initiative announced by President Park, the government aims to support girls’ education, health and professional development in disadvantaged settings. Over the last five years, we have increased our humanitarian assistance for refugees by tenfold and will continue to expand our contributions.

The principle of leaving no one behind cannot be compromised or negotiated. It is THE imperative that must be taken into account when making policies. Even if we meet our targets in 2030, if these gains are not shared by all, then we cannot credit our accomplishments with any legitimacy.

I hope that the discussions we have begun at the HLPF will become an important vehicle to realize this principle, and to truly make the world as we want it to live in. Thank you. /End/