Statement delivered by Counsellor KIM Jung-ha  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations  
Third Committee of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
Agenda item 27: Social Development  
7 October 2013  
New York  

<Check against Delivery>

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the chairmanship of the Third Committee of the 68th session of the General Assembly. My delegation will render our full support and cooperation during this session.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, the international community made concerted efforts to address various social challenges, including poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. While progress has been made, both income and non-income inequality still prevail, and many social groups are suffering from the aftermath of the recent global financial and economic crisis.

At this important juncture, with less than two years until the MDGs target year of 2015, my delegation would like to underline the following three points in regard to the agenda of today’s session.

First, in order to achieve the core social development objectives and generate people-centered development, the
empowerment and participation of individuals should be given priority attention. I share the view expressed in the Secretary-General’s Report A/68/174 that empowered people can optimize their capacities, resources and opportunities, thereby contributing to poverty eradication, social integration, and full employment and decent work for all. I am glad to note that many Member States concurred with this view during the last Session of the Commission for Social Development. Many Member States reaffirmed their commitments to promote participation by creating mechanisms and institutions that foster engagement and by strengthening the effectiveness and transparency of existing institutions.

Based on our own experience, the Korean Government attaches significant importance to the role of education in empowering people. Education can help individuals unleash their potential, increase awareness of rights, and promote gender equality. In this regard, the Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) deserves more support and attention from Member States. This initiative will help bring us one step closer to achieving the MDGs and realizing inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Second, if we are to promote inclusive growth, the international community should pay more attention to marginalized and vulnerable social groups. These groups—which include persons with disabilities, the elderly, youth, indigenous people, and women—face persistent poverty, social exclusion, and unequal access to education, health services, and job markets. In advancing the Post-2015 development agenda, the international community should place the greatest priority on guaranteeing the dignity of all. At the national level, governments should promote the integration of excluded groups through social protection systems, education, and participatory institution-building.

As part of these efforts, the Korean Government successfully hosted the UN ESCAP High-level intergovernmental Meeting in November 2012 on disability-inclusive development. The outcome document, the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, was adopted to ensure that persons with disabilities would be included in the implementation of new development goals at all levels of the process. We believe our region can make substantial progress in this area by the deadline of the Asian Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities in 2022.

Third, partnership with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, should be further promoted to enhance social development. The increased participation of all stakeholders in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating social policies will greatly contribute to social inclusion, social integration, and social cohesion, thereby addressing inequality and poverty at the national and local level.

In an effort to overcome the Asian currency crisis in 1997, the Korean Government established the Economic and
Social Development Commission to foster social dialogue between workers, entrepreneurs, government officials, and experts in various fields to shape sound labor, industrial, economic, and social policies. Through the work of the Commission, we were able to develop social agreements and consensus on major labor issues, such as the reduction of working hours, the reinforcement of social safety nets, and the prevention of work-related injuries. The Commission has contributed to increased economic development and further social integration in our country. We strongly believe that vibrant dialogue enables positive social integration and improves the responsiveness of the public sector to public needs.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by reiterating our firm commitment to actively participate in international, regional, and national efforts to empower individuals and eradicate poverty, deepen social integration, and promote full employment and decent work for all. My Government is ready to share its valuable experience and best practices in this field with other Governments as well as civil society in order to advance social development.

Thank you. /End/