

**Statement by Counsellor Hanseung Kum
Of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea
4th formal meeting of SDGs Open Working Group
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Mr. Co-Chair,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs for convening the 4th meeting of the SDGs OWG. I would also like to thank the Technical Support Team for providing the issue briefs.

Health is central to development. It is a precondition for, as well as an indicator and an outcome, of progress in sustainable development. For the past decade, health progress in many low and middle income countries has been impressive. Nevertheless, it is certain that many countries will not meet the MDG targets and much remains to be done beyond 2015.

While there is no doubt that health must have a place in the formulation of the SDGs, a convincing case needs to be made for how a health goal should be framed. In this regard, my delegation would like to make three suggestions.

First, we should make last minute efforts to achieve the unfinished health MDGs by 2015. The health MDGs must be monitored continuously for sustainable development.

Second, the SDGs on health should be based on a systematic approach rather than a symptomatic approach. In this connection, we would like to propose universal health coverage as the core SDG. Universal health coverage is the most powerful unifying concept in health issues and contributes to inclusive, equitable accessibility for health services.

Korea achieved universal health coverage in only 12 years since the introduction of National Health Insurance. Access to health care was secured across the country and there has been a significant increase in health outcomes in a short span of time.

There are numerous paths to universal health coverage. However, we must be reminded of the fact that countries are at varying stages. Having sub-indicators that can reflect the elements and measure their improvement may be necessary moving forward.

Third, Non Communicable Diseases should be given our gravest attention. NCDs are the premier cause of death in all countries, both developed and developing. NCDs are highly linked to unique systems and lifestyles by country. Therefore, tackling NCDs requires more government responsibility to mobilize internal resources and capacity than when dealing with communicable diseases.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Population dynamics continue to shape the key development challenges that the world will confront in the future, and in return are shaped by macroeconomic, social, and environmental policies.

The Republic of Korea has experienced a decline in its fertility rate and the aging of its population for the past decades. The negative effects of the aging of population due to low birth rate on the macro-economy induces the reduction of economically active participation, labor input, savings ratio, and weakens the capital and total factor productivity.

With this in mind, we would like to make two proposals on the issue of population dynamics.

First, a systematic consideration of population dynamics is needed for the formulation of sustainable development goals, targets, and indicators. Without the systematic consideration of population data and projections, we cannot meet the needs of a large and growing population, all the while ensuring the sustainability of the natural environment.

Second, we need to prepare a comprehensive plan to address population dynamics in a holistic way, which includes investing in human capital, assessing the developmental benefits of migration, and creating livable, sustainable, and green cities for a growing population. In this regard, the Korean Government enacted the Basic Law on Low Fertility and Aged Society and established the Presidential Committee in 2005 to address this issue. In accordance to the law, the Korean Government sets up a comprehensive basic plan to address low fertility and aging society every five years.

Mr. Co-Chair,

We have been privileged to share our experiences with developing countries and we will further strengthen our efforts to work together in achieving Universal Health Coverage in the world. We will continue to participate constructively in our continuing efforts to address global health and population dynamics. Thank you.