



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Summary record of the 2188th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 22 August 2012, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Avtonomov

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention *(continued)*

Fifteenth and sixteenth periodic reports of the Republic of Korea (continued)
(CERD/C/KOR/15-16; CERD/C/KOR/Q/15-16)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of the Republic of Korea took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Hong Jinpyo** (Republic of Korea), representative of the National Human Rights Commission said that on the request of the Government the Commission had reviewed the draft periodic report and submitted its comments and recommendations in February 2012, which had been only partially reflected in the report. For instance, account had not been taken of the recommendation to include in the report a reference to a case involving human rights violations at a migrant detention centre that the Commission had uncovered in 2008. Another omission was the incidence of unlawful entry and excessive use of force against migrants at their place of work. The Commission had urged the Government to take measures to stop such violations. There had also been a failure to relate an important case of racial discrimination in the report, despite the Commission's recommendation that the State party should do so, concerning the conviction of a Republic of Korea national by a district court in 2009 for public racial slurs against a foreign national. The court had held that the victim had felt publicly insulted by the discriminatory remarks.

3. The Commission had also recommended that paragraph 15 should be amended to make it more accurate. In particular, most of the 36 persons who had been granted refugee status in 2008 had received such status on appeal against decisions by the Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, the number of persons recognized as refugees in 2009 had risen sharply owing to fast-track examination procedures. The Commission had also urged the Government to take measures to prevent E-6 entertainment visas, widely associated with work in the sex industry, from being used for the purposes of trafficking in persons. However, that recommendation had not been reproduced in the report. Although the periodic report partly took up the Commission's recommendations, more needed to be done in future reports to present more accurate and updated information on policies, systems, laws and regulations relating to issues of concern to the Committee.

4. **Mr. Choi Suyoung** (Republic of Korea) said that while not all recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission had been reflected in the periodic report his Government had made every effort to take account of the views of the Commission and civil society during its drafting. The Commission and civil society organizations had been involved in every stage of the drafting process and the final version of the report had been sent to them. The Government would continue to solicit their views and recommendations for future reports.

5. Turning to the claim that the Commission's budget had been cut by some 20 per cent, he said that that budget had in fact remained steady and had even increased somewhat in 2012 by more than 4 per cent over the previous year. The Commission itself was fully in line with the Paris Principles and its mandate and functions were governed by the National Human Rights Commission Act. The Government sought to ensure that it had adequate funding. With respect to the independence of the Commission, he said that members could not be dismissed unless they were convicted of criminal offences.

6. Out of the some 800 recommendations of the Commission posted on its website 2 related to racial discrimination, 1 to discrimination on the basis of skin colour and 11 to discrimination on the basis of country of origin. There were various means of filing complaints of discrimination with the Commission, including by telephone, fax or e-mail.

The small number of reported cases of racial discrimination in the country was attributable to the fact that such discrimination did not pose a serious problem in Korean society.

7. With respect to the questions raised concerning the incorporation of a prohibition of racial discrimination in national legislation, he referred members to paragraphs 17 to 23 of the periodic report, setting out the protections provided by article 11 of the Constitution, which included all forms of discrimination. While the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to take one example, did not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, age, HIV/AIDS or sexual orientation, it was widely recognized that such discrimination was prohibited under the Covenant. The same applied to his country's legal system. Nevertheless, his Government would give due consideration to incorporating a definition of racial discrimination into national legislation in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, in particular in a national anti-discrimination law.

8. The Government had tried to pass an anti-discrimination act. As indicated in paragraphs 33 to 35 of the report, the bill concerning discrimination had not been fully reviewed by the National Assembly because of a lack of time. Failure to pass the bill did not mean that the Government or the National Assembly did not take the anti-discrimination law seriously. One major objective of the second five-year National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, which the Government had recently launched, was the enactment of an anti-discrimination act in the coming years. The first National Action Plan had been fully evaluated and had been used to set the priorities for the current Plan.

9. **Mr. Bang Kitae** (Republic of Korea) said that the current National Action Plan, for the period from March 2012 to the end of 2016, aimed at improving human rights systems, laws and practices in the Republic of Korea. The internal evaluation of the first Plan in 2011 showed that the more than 200 tasks under the Plan had been fully implemented. As the current Plan covered political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights in a very balanced manner, it was not possible to list the tasks in order of priority. Tasks relating to racial discrimination had been included in the current Plan, in particular with respect to laws to address social discrimination and promote and protect the human rights of migrants with irregular status in the country. The Plan also provided for the stable legal status of married migrant women, the expansion of social integration programmes for immigrants and enhanced support for non-citizens who were victims of trafficking in persons. Nearly 25 government agencies had participated in the drafting of the Plan, and they were all responsible for ensuring that the more than 200 tasks identified were accomplished. Furthermore, they were required to submit regular yearly reports on the status of implementation to the National Human Rights Policy Council. The current Plan would be evaluated not only internally but by outside experts through an evaluation board. The Government had solicited the views of migrant worker and civil society organizations in developing the Plan and would do likewise in reviewing its implementation. Lastly, the Government's continuing efforts to pass a law prohibiting discrimination included the establishment of a special task force to review relevant domestic laws and international standards on discrimination.

10. **Mr. Jang Hyun Suk** (Republic of Korea) said that under the employment permit system foreign workers were allowed to change workplaces under certain conditions. The conditions took into consideration the employer of the foreign worker, the domestic labour market and the human rights of the employee. In the event of the temporary or permanent closure of a business, a breach of the employment contract, human rights violations or wrongful treatment, the foreign worker was entitled to seek other employment without restriction. Employment change restrictions were common among other countries with similar employment permit systems. However, the Government had made continued efforts to ease the restrictions. For example, the laws had been amended in December 2009 to

expand the grounds on which foreign workers could change jobs. The period granted foreign workers to seek new employment had also been extended, from two to three months.

11. Turning to the issue of the exploitation of migrant workers by temporary work agencies, he said that until recently the Government had had two ways of helping foreign workers seeking a change in employment to find a new employer. The first was to recommend the foreign worker to companies looking to recruit workers. The second was to provide a list of such companies to foreign workers so that they themselves could seek employment directly. However, the list had proved inadequate as foreign workers tended to lack the requisite language skills and knowledge of the country's geography to make use of it. Brokers had thus intervened to take advantage of the situation, requiring foreign workers to pay unnecessary fees to find employment. In the worst cases, some foreign workers became illegal residents. As a result, a Government-run employment centre had been set up to recommend foreign workers to companies seeking to recruit temporary employees. Furthermore, labour protections had been enhanced so as to better match businesses with foreign workers.

12. The Government also provided the foreign workers concerned with information concerning the business seeking to recruit, including contact numbers and other information. Workers were notified when they had been recommended to companies and were free to communicate directly with the employer, arrange interviews and enter into employment contracts. The centre tried to find the most appropriate employer and took into consideration the preferences of the foreign worker concerned when it made its recommendations. The foreign worker was under no obligation to be interviewed by or to work for a given company and was entitled to request to be recommended for work elsewhere. Thus, foreign workers were not merely obliged to wait until they were recruited.

13. The employment permit system itself was based on the notion that the foreign worker would work in the country. To avoid long-term unemployment of foreign workers, a time limit had been set to seek new employment. Foreign workers who were unable to find employment within that period were most often those whom the employment centre had difficulty contacting or who did not actively seek employment. The average number of foreign workers who had been unable to find employment since January 2012 stood at 280 persons per month. When the three-month deadline for seeking a new post drew near, the centre stepped up its efforts to help the person concerned to find employment. The Government expected that the number of workers obliged to leave the country because they could not find employment would decrease under the new legislation.

14. Replying to a question concerning the regulation limiting the period of employment of foreign workers to 4 years and 10 months, he confirmed that the initial three-year employment permit could be extended by an employer for a maximum period of 1 year and 10 months. He pointed out that similar systems were operated in other countries.

15. There were 34 Migrant Worker Support Centres which provided a wide range of services, including Korean language tuition, training courses in Korean culture, grievance services, legal counselling on labour issues, free medical care and interpretation services. Some centres also had shelters for persons in need.

16. The employment permit system had been introduced in 2004 to address problems encountered in the industrial trainee system established in 1993. The two systems had operated concurrently until the industrial trainee system had been abolished in early 2007.

17. Migrant workers with legal status under the employment permit system enjoyed the same rights as nationals to join and create trade unions under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Adjustment Act. The question as to whether irregular workers could establish

trade unions, such as the Seoul-Gyeonggi-Incheon Migrants Trade Union, was pending before the Supreme Court.

18. **Mr. Choi** Suyoung (Republic of Korea) said that his country's rapid development into a multicultural society presented the Government with a major challenge and affected all aspects of everyday life. An interministerial approach was adopted incorporating a complex range of measures.

19. **Ms. Kim** Garo (Republic of Korea) said that the definition of a multicultural family reflected the specific circumstances in the Republic of Korea. Since the middle of the previous decade there had been a marked increase in marriages between Koreans and foreign nationals. Foreigners joining a Korean spouse had difficulties adapting to the language and culture. The Government had therefore developed support policies and in 2008 had enacted the Support for Multicultural Families Act. Article 2 of the Act defined multicultural families as those consisting of Korean nationals and immigrant spouses, and defined multicultural children as members of multicultural families. In 2011 the scope of the definition had been expanded to include spouses who had acquired Korean citizenship after their marriage. The goal was to improve the quality of life for members of multicultural families and not to promote assimilation. Provision was made for Korean language tuition, and translation and interpretation services were provided. Multicultural Family Support Centres also held courses designed to assist couples in understanding multicultural concepts, thereby improving their relationship. An international marriage guidance programme providing information about different countries had been developed for interested parties.

20. Linguistic and other educational measures on behalf of children from multicultural families had been introduced in 2009 and the Framework Act on Multicultural Family Support Policy had been enacted in 2010. A second version of the Framework Act and a framework plan were currently being elaborated. Support would be provided for educational adjustments, capacity development for married women, access to employment and campaigns to promote awareness of multiculturalism among the general public.

21. The Framework Act required the authorities to conduct surveys of multicultural families every three years. The first survey had been carried out in 2009 and the second would be conducted during the current year. General statistics had been compiled in 2009 on economic status, family life and demand for services. The second survey would include data on the language used by children from multicultural families, school enrolment, adaptation to school life and cases of discrimination.

22. As it was important to ensure that public officials understood multicultural concepts, training courses for officials were held at the Central Officials Training Institute and at 16 municipal and provincial training centres. Fifty-eight courses would be held in 2012 for more than 7,000 central and local government officials.

23. The Government ran an Emergency Support Centre for Migrant Women, which provided advice and rehabilitation for migrant victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking. A countrywide hotline was operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by staff who could respond in a total of 11 languages, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Tagalog. Eighteen shelters for victims of domestic violence and 1 shelter for victims of sex trafficking provided both medical and legal support. There was also a self-help centre for migrant women who aspired to greater independence.

24. **Mr. Choi** Seong-Yu (Republic of Korea) said that between 2007 and 2011 the Government had incorporated material relating to human rights, multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity in the national primary and secondary school curricula. It had also developed and distributed textbooks focusing on themes related to multiculturalism and human rights. Teacher training programmes now included courses dealing with multiculturalism, and

there was a programme that promoted contacts between parents from multicultural and non-multicultural families.

25. In 2011 there had been some 40,000 multicultural students attending elementary and intermediate-level schools. The largest proportion were from Japan, followed by China, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand. Their parents were currently being encouraged to serve as language instructors in schools, and bilingual textbooks had been produced. In addition, contacts were being established between foreign students who were studying at universities in the Republic of Korea and younger students from multicultural families.

26. Ninety-eight per cent of multicultural children born in the Republic were enrolled in an educational establishment. However, only 57 per cent of children who were born elsewhere and had entered the country later on were enrolled. According to a survey conducted in 2011, the reasons for the low ratio included the language barrier, the difficulty in forming friendships and the lack of any incentive to seek education. Upon registration, the Government informed the parents about the procedures for school enrolment. Steps were being taken to identify children who were not enrolled and support would be provided to the families concerned by a system of professional coordinators. It was hoped to increase the ratio to 80 per cent by 2014.

27. The system had been revised in 2008 and 2010 to enable multicultural children, including unregistered children, to be admitted to schools and higher education by means of proof of residence, such as a tenancy agreement.

28. The Government did not, as a rule, recognize academic results obtained in foreign schools located in the Republic of Korea, including Taiwanese and Western schools. However, if subjects such as the Korean language and Korean history were taught for a minimum number of hours per year in the schools concerned, there was a system for recognizing the schools for the purpose of domestic accreditation. One of the 50 foreign schools currently operating had already been recognized for such accreditation.

29. **Mr. Yong Ho Seong** (Republic of Korea) said that multicultural policies and social integration programmes for migrants focused on cultural diversity rather than assimilation.

30. Action to promote awareness of cultural diversity in society targeted influential actors such as media professionals, creative artists, teachers and journalists. A curriculum and syllabus that focused on cultural diversity would also be made available to cultural institutions, Multicultural Family Support Centres, primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges, and the social integration programme of the Ministry of Justice.

31. On 17 August 2012, a national policy coordination meeting chaired by the Prime Minister and attended by all other ministers had been held to discuss a comprehensive interministerial plan to enhance multicultural awareness that would be implemented jointly by all ministries. Such plans, which were elaborated every five years, sought to create a social culture that guaranteed the peaceful coexistence of a variety of ethnicities and cultures. Initiatives under the plans included educational programmes, awareness-enhancing action in the media, promotion of tolerance and inclusiveness by encouraging people to experience different cultures, and publication of a best practices booklet.

32. A brochure was being distributed to the audiovisual media with a view to promoting understanding and respect for other cultures in such media and assisting the general public in identifying forms of expression that were incompatible with multiculturalism. It was planned to designate 2013 as a year of cultural diversity and to develop a range of academic and cultural programmes to mark the occasion.

33. Action was also being taken to assist migrants in understanding their own culture. The Rainbow Bridge programme, launched in 2012, supported grass-roots cultural organizations established by migrants. It was hoped to build the capacity of migrants to

present aspects of their culture to Korean society, contributing to an enriching cycle of cultural diversity. The programme was currently being tested in six regions and would gradually be expanded to the country as a whole.

34. It was also hoped to highlight different cultures in the country's 2,000 cultural institutions. For instance, the National Museum of Korea welcomed more than 2 million visitors each year. It had so far focused on Korean folk art but there were now plans to showcase a variety of different cultures.

35. **Mr. Hong** Kwan-pyo (Republic of Korea) said that, according to article 6, paragraph 1, of the Constitution, duly ratified international treaties had the same status as domestic laws. It followed that there was no need for separate legislation to give legal effect to the Convention. It was difficult, however, to find legal decisions in which the Convention had been invoked, since there were few disputes relating to race or colour. That could change, of course, as Korean society became more multicultural. With regard to the question as to whether the Convention would take precedence over legislation that contained material which was inconsistent with its provisions, he assured the Committee that the prohibition of racial discrimination was reflected in the preamble to the Constitution as well as in article 6, paragraph 2, and article 11. Hence, any new bill was carefully reviewed to ensure that it was compatible with the provisions of the Convention. If doubts arose, the Constitutional Court could issue a ruling.

36. **Mr. Hong** Kwan-pyo (Republic of Korea) said that the Government would consider a Framework Act to prohibit discrimination, taking into account the issue of the burden of proof. Referring to the 2009 case of the Indian national who had been the object of racial slurs while travelling on a bus, the perpetrator had been fined 1 million won for the offence of uttering an insult. Trafficking in persons was not a separate offence in the statistics system of the Public Prosecutors Office, and therefore it was difficult to produce disaggregated data on the topic. However, data were available on the number of foreign women trafficked into the Republic of Korea: there had been 21 in 2009, 26 in 2010 and 15 in 2011. A bill revising the Criminal Code to include a comprehensive definition of the offence of trafficking in persons was before the National Assembly, and the Government was considering ratifying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Some of the provisions of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families ran contrary to domestic legislation, such as the Immigration Control Act, and therefore a legislative review process was necessary in order to consider ratification.

37. **Ms. Cha** Yu Jin (Republic of Korea) said that the Government published the English and Korean versions of all treaties to which the Republic of Korea was a party, while the national policy on human rights was distributed in booklet and electronic form. The Government had also introduced a component on racial discrimination in its staff development courses, had enhanced the human rights education programme for the judiciary and legal personnel and had undertaken a review of relevant legislation to make human rights mandatory in legal training. A campaign to recruit court interpreters was under way, through which 528 had been hired thus far. Under the Criminal Procedure Act, a person was deemed to have a reliable relationship with a foreign defendant — and thereby permitted to accompany the defendant to court — if he or she was a direct descendant or ascendant, a sibling, a spouse, a family member or a counsellor from a shelter or education facility. The amendments made to the legislation on domestic violence were applicable to all victims, irrespective of nationality. Victim compensation was available, but other services, such as health care and employment assistance, were not necessarily covered, particularly for non-citizen victims, owing to a lack of funds. However, the Crime Victim Assistance Act provided for greater Government spending and expanded the scope of

compensation to victims who had been legally residing in the country for at least two years. As to the treatment of defectors from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, once they had left that country they were considered citizens of the Republic of Korea, hence they were not covered under provisions for refugees set out in the Immigration Control Act. They did, nonetheless, receive integration assistance.

38. **Ms. Crickley** (Country Rapporteur) expressed concern over reports questioning the independence of the members of the National Human Rights Commission, and said that it would be useful to know the view of the Commission on the State party's overall implementation of the Convention. Turning to the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, she drew the delegation's attention to general recommendation No. 33 on follow-up to the Durban Review Conference, urged the State party to define priority actions for the elimination of racial discrimination and asked how the National Action Plan would be evaluated, specifically whether civil society would be involved in the process. She also asked how the Discrimination Prohibition Act would be implemented. She requested additional information on the employment permit system, in particular how the list of employers was drawn up and what the implications were if a migrant worker turned down a job, and suggested that three months was rather short to find alternative employment. She enquired about the protection afforded to foreign victims of trafficking or domestic violence who had been living in the country for less than two years.

39. **Mr. Saidou** asked who had the authority to apply to the Constitutional Court and at what point of the legal process, what weight was given to case law, the nature and role of the Human Rights Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, whether the Government had had to adopt measures to foster corporate social responsibility and whether steps were taken to combat racial discrimination in sports, particularly martial arts. He pointed out that, as an independent body, it was the responsibility of the National Human Rights Commission to produce an alternate report, not to provide input on the periodic report of the State party.

40. **Ms. January-Bardill** urged the State party to pay due attention to the Committee's comments on the credibility of the National Human Rights Commission and asked whether special measures had been needed to remove obstacles to housing for foreign nationals and migrant workers.

41. **Mr. Choi** Suyoung (Republic of Korea) said that the National Human Rights Commission had been established in compliance with the Paris Principles and that the independence of its chairperson and members was guaranteed under the law. The Government ensured that the Commission received adequate resources. Foreign nationals and migrant workers did not suffer discrimination in access to housing; on the contrary, they appeared to find housing despite relatively high rent levels.

42. **Mr. Yong Ho Seong** (Republic of Korea) said that there was no racial discrimination in sports; the key consideration was skill. For example, a naturalized Chinese table tennis player had represented the Republic of Korea at the recent Olympic Games in London and many foreigners coached national teams. However, there was a quota for the number of foreign players allowed for professional sports teams.

43. **Mr. Choi** Suyoung (Republic of Korea) said that the National Human Rights Commission was not part of any ministry. It was totally independent and functioned in accordance with the Paris Principles. Many ministries had their own human rights divisions, notably the Human Rights Bureau of the Ministry of Justice and the Human Rights and Social Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

44. Most Korean companies had a specific department that dealt with social responsibility. Since most companies that operated abroad registered in the country of operation, they did not technically trade under Korean jurisdiction. However, the

Government encouraged Korean companies operating abroad to respect the level of social responsibility that was required within the country.

45. **Mr. Yong Ho Seong** (Republic of Korea) said the guidelines that had been adopted on 1 August 2012 on changes in employment for migrant workers essentially meant that job centres provided details of recommended jobs to job-seekers, who were then responsible for contacting potential employers. Migrant workers who applied to change jobs were assigned an officer by the job centre who tried to match up suitable jobs with the job-seeker. If the migrant worker had not found a new job after two months, the job centre ensured that at least five positions were recommended in the third month. The new guidelines also indicated that an interpreter would be provided if necessary. The three-month period was considered sufficient as there were currently more jobs available than job-seekers. Any periods of illness or pregnancy were deducted from the three-month time limit.

46. **Mr. Choi Suyoung** (Republic of Korea) said that the second cycle of the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights would focus on combating discrimination. One of the core elements of the Plan would be the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation before the end of the second cycle. Civil society was consulted on all draft legislation in his country, and that would be the case with the anti-discrimination legislation. No further details were currently available as the second cycle was only in the initial stages of implementation.

47. **Mr. de Gouttes** urged the State party to ensure that its anti-discrimination legislation took full account of the provisions of articles 2 and 4 of the Convention. He recalled that the Committee regarded article 4 as binding in nature concerning the definition and criminalization of all acts of racial discrimination, including hate speech and propaganda based on ideas or theories of racial superiority. That was particularly important in the light of the current increase in such propaganda in the State party and elsewhere. The incorporation of those provisions in domestic legislation should enable the State party to include in its next periodic report statistical data on complaints, prosecutions and sentences regarding acts of racial hatred. He supported his colleagues' insistence on the need to ensure that the National Human Rights Commission was independent and functioned in full accordance with the Paris Principles. The Government should guarantee that civil society was involved in the preparation of the next periodic report. Steps should also be taken to improve the situation of all migrant workers and members of their families. He would welcome the delegation's comments on reports that refugees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were often detained for long periods on their arrival in the State party.

48. **Mr. Amir** asked whether the Government had signed academic and scientific cooperation agreements with other countries, including non-English-speaking countries. If so, he failed to understand why there was no equivalence between Korean and foreign qualifications. It would be useful to have additional information on the content and results of any academic and scientific cooperation agreements. He wished to know whether there were any foreign students studying at the State party's universities and, if so, where they were from.

49. **Mr. Choi Suyoung** (Republic of Korea) said that the proposed Discrimination Prohibition Act would take full account of the provisions in articles 2 and 4 of the Convention. The Government considered the National Human Rights Commission to have been established in full accordance with the Paris Principles and it would ensure it continued to function independently, in conformity with those guidelines. Steps would be taken to improve the situation of all migrant workers and members of their families. North Korean refugees were not detained in detention centres on their arrival in the Republic of Korea. Rather, they stayed in facilities where they were provided with education and training to help them adapt to their surroundings. Under the Constitution, the territory of

Korea included the entire peninsula and people from North Korea were automatically entitled to citizenship in his country.

50. **Mr. Choi** Seong-Yu (Republic of Korea) said that universities were free to enter into cooperation agreements with foreign institutions in complete independence from the Government, which had no say in those decisions. Over 60 per cent of the foreign students in primary and secondary schools were Japanese.

51. **Ms. Cha** Yu Jin (Republic of Korea) added that there were currently some 64,000 foreign students in her country. Some 47,000 were Chinese and many others came from Japan, Mongolia, the United States and Viet Nam. The families of refugees had no problems entering and obtaining migrant status in her country.

52. **Ms. Kim** Se Jin (Republic of Korea), responding to questions asked by Committee members at the previous meeting, said that migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers experienced no obstacles when registering their children's births. Under the Nationality Act, foreign spouses did not require a personal guarantee from their spouse to apply for Korean citizenship. Foreign spouses who divorced owing to abandonment, mental cruelty or financial exploitation by their Korean partner were still eligible for citizenship.

53. The refugee support centre was located on Yeongjong Island, near Incheon International Airport. It provided medical services, accommodation, employment advice and instruction on life in the Republic of Korea. Measuring some 30,000 square metres, the support centre could accommodate about 100 people. Under the Framework Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Korea, the Government had sought to strengthen the participation of civil society in efforts to monitor the implementation of social integration policies. There were some 189 members of the monitoring team, 50 of whom were foreigners. Thanks to the efforts of that team, immediate or longer-term solutions were often found to problems that arose from the implementation of those policies.

54. **Ms. Crickley** said that the Committee aimed to support the State party in its efforts to create and maintain the conditions for the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Convention. It did so in recognition of the upheavals that had taken place in the State party over the past century, its transition from a country of emigration to one of immigration and the rapid development it had experienced more recently. The Committee also acknowledged the State party's assertion that it was a multicultural society, and encouraged it to maintain parity of esteem for all the members of that society in terms of their rights under the Convention.

55. The Committee's concluding observations would focus on the questions of legislation and definition, infrastructure, including the National Human Rights Commission, and constructive criticism from civil society. Other concerns would include the situation of migrant workers and refugees, international spouses and minority ethnic groups. She recalled that treating all groups in the same way did not constitute a lack of discrimination. In that regard, she encouraged the State party to refer to the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 on the meaning and scope of special measures in the Convention. Moreover, a small number of complaints concerning racial discrimination often indicated a lack of awareness rather than the absence of racism. She encouraged the State party to welcome migrant workers, given the contribution they made to the economy and their key role in the country's development.

56. **Mr. Choi** Suyoung (Republic of Korea) thanked the Committee members for their constructive questions and suggestions and assured them that all their comments would be given full consideration by the relevant authorities. The Government was working towards building a multicultural society without any discrimination and had made substantial progress since consideration of the previous periodic report in 2007. There was,

nonetheless, much room for improvement, which would be informed by the reporting process under the Convention and consultations with the National Human Rights Commission and civil society. In order to maintain coherence between Korean society and domestic legislation, the Government made continuous efforts to raise awareness about and build an institutionalized framework for the prevention of racial discrimination. Attitudes towards foreigners and minority ethnic groups were changing and society now fully recognized the value of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. The Government would continue to work for greater unity and diversity.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.