

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador LEE Jung-hoon
Ambassador for Human Rights of the Republic of Korea
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The Republic of Korea welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur and appreciates his continued efforts over past four years.

Since the report of the COI was released in February, the human rights situation in the DPRK has become one of the most pressing issues of the international community. We recall the findings and recommendations of the COI report, which concludes that many human rights violations in the DPRK may amount to crimes against humanity.

My delegation concurs with the Special Rapporteur that the human rights situation in the DPRK requires a systemic and comprehensive approach with greater urgency. We call on the DPRK to accept the recommendations made by the COI and cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur. While welcoming the DPRK's recent indications of its intention to engage in dialogues with the international community in principle, we expect the DPRK to take concrete and genuine measures to address its human rights situation.

The issue of international abductions by the DPRK is another serious concern of the international community as a whole. I would like to hear from the Special Rapporteur how he plans to deal with this urgent issue based on the report. We, of course, call on the DPRK to take immediate measures to resolve the issue of Korean abductees during and after the Korean War as well as the prisoners-of-war still detained in the DPRK.

In addition, as the Special Rapporteur continues to emphasize the principle of *non-refoulement*, we call on all States to adhere to the principle to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing the DPRK are not forcibly returned.

We also remain deeply concerned about the urgent humanitarian issue of separated families in the two Koreas. To address this issue, it is necessary for both sides to promptly agree on family reunions on a larger scale and a regular basis.

The annual resolution on the human rights situation in the DPRK is now being discussed at this committee. The Republic of Korea will join other countries so that the resolution duly reflects the important recommendations of the COI. We expect the adoption of the resolution next month, which will help address the dire human rights situation and alleviate the sufferings of the people in the DPRK. As part of the efforts to improve human rights situation in the DPRK, we will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea to build confidence and cooperation between the two Koreas.

The Republic of Korea is working closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish a field-based structure, as mandated by Human Rights Council resolution, to build upon the work of the COI. We hope that it will help facilitate the work of the Special Rapporteur to implement the recommendations of the COI.

Finally, let me assure you that the Republic of Korea remains fully committed to support the work of the Special Rapporteur. We welcome his visit to the Republic of Korea scheduled for next month, and believe that his tireless efforts will in no uncertain terms contribute significantly to improving the human rights situation in the DPRK. End.