



**Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic
of Korea to the United Nations Office and Other
International Organizations in Geneva**

1, chemin de Plonjon 1207 Geneva Tel. 022 735 43 70 Fax : 022 786 06 62

Opening Address by the Head of the DPRK Delegation

(19th Working Group Session of UPR, Geneva, 01 May 2014)

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

The delegation of the DPRK appreciates this opportunity to participate in the 19th session of the UPR Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council.

The DPRK has consistently maintained, over the past 4 years since its first cycle review in December 2009, the people-centred human rights ideas and position that fully guarantee the dignity, equality and worthwhile lives of its people.

During this period broad consultations were held in a sincere manner with a large number of relevant national institutions and organizations with a view to giving serious consideration to the recommendations received at its first cycle review and, as a result, a decision was made to accept many and take note of some of them. Most of the accepted recommendations have been implemented or are under implementation.

I would like to refer you to the documents before you for the details of the position of the DPRK on the recommendations received during the first cycle review.

Although the DPRK Government has been making every sincere effort for the protection and promotion of human rights of its people including by taking

positive measures, certain forces obsessed with ingrained repugnance towards the DPRK are pursuing confrontation and pressures, deliberately ignoring the real human rights situation on the ground.

However, we attach importance to the UPR mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council as it treats human rights situations of all countries impartially and equally.

Proceeding from this position, we submitted our national report to the UN Human Rights Council in January, and today a delegation of representatives of several national institutions is present here for an interactive dialogue with you, distinguished delegates.

We hope this session will be a good occasion for you to have a correct understanding of the real human rights situation of the DPRK and make an objective and impartial assessment.

Mr. President,

During the period under review, all people in our country, under the wise leadership of the respected Marshal **KIM JONG UN** and his politics of valuing people and love for people, made strenuous efforts, braving all sorts of trials and hardships, for the economic development and improvement of people's living, guided by our own development strategy and innovative ways and means.

A series of human rights-related laws were adopted during this period, thus securing firm legal guarantees for the implementation of the policies of the State on the protection and promotion of human rights.

A Decree on the Enforcement of the Universal 12-year Education System was promulgated in September, 2012, the Laws on the Protection of Child Rights and Women's Rights adopted in December, 2010, Labour Protection Law in July, 2010, the Laws on Higher Education and General Education

respectively in January and December 2011 and the Law on Prevention of Earthquake and Volcano Disasters and Rescue Operations in August 2011.

Amendments were made to the Public Health Law, Law of the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, Copyright Law, Law on Complaints and Petitions, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law and other human rights laws.

The newly adopted or amended laws are strictly implemented through their incorporation into the relevant regulations and rules.

Due regard was given to reflecting the requirements of the international human rights instruments to which the DPRK is a State party, making it possible to responsibly carry out our obligations under the relevant treaties.

The period under review was marked by the adopting or amending of a lot more human rights laws than ever before.

This is indicative of the firm commitment and sincere efforts on the part of the DPRK to fully ensure the human rights of its citizens and to faithfully fulfill its obligations under the relevant international human rights instruments.

Innovative measures were taken for the protection and promotion of civil and political rights.

General pardon was granted to convicts in January 2012 and the term of penalties shortened and the degree of punishment mitigated through the amending of the Criminal Law in 2010. Leniency was shown for criminals through the exemption of penalties or commuting of sentences in case he or she, though committed a serious crime, volunteered to make full confessions.

Independence and impartiality of the judiciary was further ensured through the amending of the Criminal Procedure Law in 2011, and measures were taken for the prevention and punishment of human rights violations and abuse of power in the handling of cases by law enforcement officials.

The Law on Complaints and Petitions was amended and the functions of the complaints-handling machinery at people's power organs at all levels, institutions and enterprises further enhanced, thus ensuring the settlement of all complaints in a timely and fair manner.

The Government made great endeavours to bring about a radical improvement in economic construction and people's living and build a socialist civilized country.

With a view to addressing food shortages the agricultural sector was set as the main thrust and nationwide attention was given to this sector, while incentivising farmers through the introduction of new agricultural management methods, innovating agricultural science and technology and taking measures to expand the area under cultivation, resulting in increased grain output.

Bases of livestock, fruit farming and fisheries were newly built and the existing ones modernized, bringing substantial benefits to people.

Efforts were focused on laying material and technical foundations for people to fully enjoy the benefits of universal free medical care system, while trying to achieve the goal of reaching international standards in major health indicators.

Tele-medicine linking the local hospitals to the central ones was established, Okryu Children's Hospital, Breast Tumor Institute of Pyongyang Maternity Hospital and Ryugyong Dental Hospital newly built, dozens of central and local hospitals renovated and production of traditional Koryo medicine placed on normal and scientific basis.

Disease outbreak rate decreased significantly and coverage of vaccines of various kinds have reached a high level in recent years.

Following the promulgation of the Decree on the Enforcement of Universal 12-year Compulsory Education System, a replacement of the former

11-year system, education began under the new program starting from the school year 2014-2015.

The quality of university education was further enhanced through the improved educational conditions including, in particular, the setting up at several universities of e-libraries furnished with excellent equipment and facilities.

Tele-education system was set up linking the local libraries and scientific and educational institutions to the central library, thereby paving the way for attaining the goal of the Government to ensure the acquisition by all people of modern science and technology.

The Government continued to effect the policy of building houses at State expenses and providing them to people free of charge. Thousands of modern houses and welfare facilities were built not only in the capital city of Pyongyang and provinces but in remote areas and islets on the west sea.

As a result of the efforts of the Government to provide people with civilized conditions for cultural life, in 2013 alone, hundreds of places for leisure and cultural activities like pleasure grounds, sports parks, folk gardens were set up in different parts of the country.

Progress was made in the efforts to protect and promote the rights of children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities.

Modern educational conditions were provided, contents of education updated and children's camps and clubs renovated to create conditions for all children to acquire a wide range of knowledge, noble morality and strong physique.

Special concern was shown for the growth, health care and education of children without parents, with all necessary measures taken for the construction

of new nurseries and kindergartens, improved diet and provision of nutritious foods and clothing.

The institution of November 16 as “Mothers’ Day” in 2012 and the convening of the 4th National Meeting of Mothers was the manifestation of high appreciation of their contribution to the development of society and well-being of their families, as well as serving as an important occasion in fostering the social atmosphere of respecting them and further protecting and promoting of their rights.

As a number of housewives chose to participate in public life in response to the State measure in 2010, the institutions, enterprises and organizations concerned provided their working women with good working conditions and welfare facilities.

Efforts were also made to increase the number of women public officials and provide them with systematic in-service training.

A modern institute was set up under the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, and medical examination and treatment of all women in the country are being conducted regularly, resulting in a marked improvement in women’s health.

The Korean Federation for the Protection of the Elderly became more vibrant in its activities, new State measures were taken for the care of old persons with no one to depend on, a new support system put in place for old homes and social atmosphere of respecting and rendering both moral and material assistance to them established.

The Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities refined its work system and expanded the scope of its activities, with a series of measures taken for the early detection and recovery of children with disabilities, improvement of arts, sports and vocational training of persons with disabilities.

Mr. President,

We are proud of the progresses we have made during the past four years overcoming all sorts of obstacles and challenges for the protection and promotion of human rights. We will continue to make highly responsible endeavours to make sure that our people enjoy a higher level of genuine human rights.

The efforts of the DPRK for the protection and promotion of human rights continue to face serious challenges and obstacles.

The persistent politically-motivated pressure and military threat by outside forces against the DPRK remain major sources of destructing the peaceful environment needed for the economic construction and improvement of people's living.

Moreover, the aggravating economic sanctions against the DPRK threaten our people's rights to existence and pose a stumbling block to ensuring peaceful development of the country.

We will further strengthen our national defence capabilities to firmly safeguard our socialist system, national sovereignty, the lives and safety of our people, while making dynamic efforts for the economic development and improvement of people's living.

We will further promote cooperation and dialogue with all countries friendly towards us, and open up new channels for improved relationships without questioning the past. We will honour the international human rights instruments and faithfully fulfill our obligations in the field of human rights.

In conclusion, we are convinced that this review will serve as a good occasion in promoting your understanding of the real human rights situation of the DPRK and encouraging it in its efforts for the protection and promotion of

human rights and will participate in the interactive dialogue in a spirit of constructiveness and sincerity.

Thank you.