

Replies of the Republic of Korea to the List of Issues in Relation to the Fifth Periodic Report

General Information

Reply to paragraph 2

1. The Government continues to conduct trainings and workshops described in paragraphs 7-9 of the fifth periodic report to ensure the justiciability of the rights under the Covenant. (Annex, Tables 1-3)
2. The legislature participated in preparing the fifth periodic report by providing information on the status and content of bills proposed to implement recommendations of the previous concluding observations.

Reply to paragraph 3

3. Measures taken to implement the previous concluding observations are described in the fifth periodic report, and measures adopted after its submission are set out in this report and the Annex. In the Republic of Korea (ROK), each ministry responsible for each treaty is in charge of its implementation, reporting, and follow-up. Civil society organizations and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK) also participate in the implementation and monitoring of the recommendations. (Annex 4)

Reply to paragraph 4

4. In 2023, the Government commissioned a research study¹ to identify issues related to the ratification of Optional Protocol by analyzing the Committee's decisions. In 2025, a resolution urging its ratification was introduced in the National Assembly.

Reply to paragraph 5

5. The Government collects statistics based on various criteria, including sex, age, disability status, income level, and region, in relation to the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights.² The collected data are publicly available through the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS, kosis.kr) and are accessible in both Korean and English. In the 2025 Population and Housing Census, the questionnaire was revised to allow same-sex partners to be recorded as household members.

¹ <https://www.prism.go.kr/homepage/asmt/popup/1270000-202300070>

² For example, the Survey of Household Finances and Living Conditions includes disaggregated data on vulnerable groups, such as elderly households, multicultural households, and households with persons with disabilities.

Reply to paragraph 6

Nationally determined contribution (NDC)

6. ROK has adopted 2050 carbon neutrality as a national vision and set mid- to long-term targets to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and 53-61% by 2035, compared to 2018. In 2024, the emissions were reduced by 12% compared to net emissions in 2018, with approximately 23% reduction in the power sector. As a follow-up to the 2035 NDC, the Government will establish new annual and sector-specific reduction targets up to 2035 and adopt a “Second National Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth Basic Plan” containing sector-specific measures to implement them.³ In developing and implementing policies, the Government will ensure transparency and social consensus through inter-ministerial consultations, expert review, and engagement with industry and civil society, while continuously monitoring and improving them. (Annex, Table 5)

Reply to paragraph 6(a)

7. A pilot fact-finding survey was conducted to examine the impacts of the climate crisis on climate-vulnerable groups and their policy needs,⁴ and the survey will be expanded nationwide from 2026. Based on the findings, the Government established heatwave and cold-wave response infrastructure for climate-vulnerable groups and provided support for heating and cooling costs and for improvements in energy efficiency. Support measures for vulnerable groups have been included in the Fourth National Climate Crisis Adaptation Plan (2026-2030, “the Fourth Plan”).⁵ (Annex, Table 6)

Reply to paragraph 6(b)

8. The Fourth Plan involves 18 relevant ministries and includes cross-sectoral measures to reduce the impacts of the climate crisis across society, including national infrastructure innovation to enhance climate resilience and the protection of vulnerable groups. The scale of fiscal investment is estimated at approximately KRW 7.9 trillion (based on the Third Plan in 2025) to KRW 8.8 trillion (based on the Fourth Plan in 2026) per year, and implementation reviews are annually conducted with the public and experts.

³ The acceleration of renewable energy deployment, the development of carbon-reduction technologies for high-emitting industries, the establishment of transport sector electrification roadmaps, the expansion of heat pump deployment, the transition to low-GWP refrigerants, and the expansion of livestock manure-to-energy facilities, etc.

⁴ Conducted on two occasions (2024: Seoul and Busan, 2025: Seoul, Busan, and Gangwon).

⁵ Pursuant to Article 38 of the *Framework Act on Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth for Coping with Climate Crisis*, the Government has been developing and implementing the National Climate Crisis Adaptation Plan every five years since 2011 with 18 relevant ministries.

Reply to paragraph 6(c)

Preparation for natural disasters

9. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) has overall responsibility for affairs related to natural disasters, and, in particular, has enacted and implemented the *Countermeasures against Natural Disasters Act* to strengthen capacities to prepare for and respond to disasters. Also, the Government conducts national-level training to enhance the capacity of disaster management agencies, enforces laws and policies to ensure the efficient management of resources required when a disaster occurs. It operates a system of autonomous disaster prevention teams to strengthen capacity in the private sector.

Measures to reduce disaster risk

10. The Government conducts risk assessments of damage caused by natural disasters and ex-ante analyses of disaster risks arising from development activities. It is investing in installing disaster prevention facilities to prevent large-scale damage from natural disasters. Dedicated units are also operated to focus on responses to floods and storms, earthquakes, heatwaves, and cold waves.
11. The Government has a comprehensive plan for responding to natural disasters and monitors its implementation. Across the disaster management sector, it establishes a Basic Plan for Safety Management and its implementation plans to ensure that disaster management policies are coherently coordinated across the Government. It also seeks to allocate financial resources appropriately by presenting disaster and safety budgets to the Ministry of Economy and Finance after the prior review by the MOIS.

Reply to paragraph 6(d)

12. Pursuant to the *Framework Act on Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth for Coping with Climate Crisis*, the Ministry of Climate, Energy, and Environment led the process of preparing the Fourth Plan by holding eight inter-ministerial working-level consultations in 2025, and conducted an implementation review of the Plan in December 2025.
13. In normal times, the Central Safety Management Committee, which is established under the Prime Minister, exercises general control over disaster and safety management affairs. The Prime Minister shall serve as the Chairperson, and heads of central administrative agencies or related institutions or organizations shall serve as the members, and the Committee deliberates matters concerning the important policies on disaster and safety management and the coordination of disaster and safety management affairs. When a disaster occurs, the

Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters, an ad hoc body headed by the Minister of the MOIS, is established to coordinate and exercise general control over matters concerning the response to and recovery from disasters. Where a government-wide response is required, the Prime Minister may assume the role of head of the Headquarters.

B. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (Articles 1-5)

Maximum available resources

Reply to paragraph 7

14. See Annex, Tables 7-14
15. As of 2021, public social protection expenditure amounted to KRW 338.2 trillion (15.2% of GDP), representing a 10.5% year-on-year increase. (Annex, Table 15)

Non-discrimination

Reply to paragraph 8(a)

16. As of March 2026, two members' bills have been introduced in the 22nd National Assembly. The Government will present constructive opinions in National Assembly deliberations and participate in a national policy task⁶ of "reviewing legislation to prevent hatred and discrimination and promoting public dialogue."

Reply to paragraph 8(b)

17. Under the *National Health Insurance Act*, dependents are defined as persons who are supported mainly by the employee insured, including spouses or lineal ascendants of the employee insured. In a related decision by the Supreme Court en banc⁷, it was held that there is no essential difference between opposite-sex partners in *de facto* relationships recognized as dependents under the guidelines and same-sex partners forming a shared household. Accordingly, pursuant to a Supreme Court en banc ruling, the Government recognizes same-sex couples as eligible dependents under the National Health Insurance (NHI) on the same basis as opposite-sex couples in *de facto* marital relationships and provides them with health insurance benefits.
18. However, in terms of the survivors' pension⁸ under the *National Pension Act*, "spouse"

⁶ Key implementation tasks for state governance that the Government of ROK pursues during the President's five-year term.

⁷ 2023Du36800 on 17 July 2024.

⁸ Designed to protect the livelihoods of family members who may face financial hardship due to the death of the household's principal breadwinner. As funded by contributions from the whole population, the eligibility requirements for its payment are based on social consensus.

includes “a person in a *de facto* marital relationship,” which is assessed based on official records, and this is applied based on the interpretation of marital relationships under the *Civil Act*. Also, the survivors’ pension is paid only to the highest-ranked person, considering the kinship relationship with the deceased and whether the claimant was supported mainly by the deceased. This differs from the NHI system, under which persons may be recognized as dependents regardless of number if they meet the eligibility criteria. The expansion of the scope of spouse under the survivors’ pension scheme will be discussed after considering the interpretation of the concept of spouse under the *Civil Act* and fairness with other public pension schemes (including the public officials’ pension and teachers’ pension), and when the social consensus on the family system has been formed.

Reply to paragraph 8(c)

Access to social security

19. As noted in paragraph 28 of the fifth periodic report, foreign nationals who meet certain requirements also receive basic living security benefits. Also, a person who has been divorced from or bereaved of his or her spouse, who is a national of ROK, and is either raising any minor child who is a national of ROK or is pregnant with a child of the deceased spouse, qualifies as an eligible recipient. In 2023, the Government submitted to the National Assembly a bill to amend the relevant law⁹ to allow foreign spouses to be eligible for benefits if they live or make a living together with their children over 18 who are nationals of ROK.
20. The Government applies health insurance benefits to foreign nationals residing in ROK same as nationals, where they are employed in a workplace in ROK or have lawfully resided in the country for six months or longer.¹⁰ It has improved the system to allow humanitarian stay permit holders (G-1-6) and their family members (G-1-12) to be self-employed insured since January 2021, and seasonal workers (E-8) since October 2024. However, for foreign nationals, certain operational criteria differ from those applied to nationals.¹¹ This is because the NHI is a social insurance scheme financed by contributions paid by the insured.¹² To better protect foreign nationals’ right to health, the Government raised the threshold for restricting benefits based on the number of arrears to three times since April 2025. It

⁹ Expired with the end of the National Assembly’s term in 2024.

¹⁰ Mandatory foreign national registration is required under the *Immigration Control Act* when staying in ROK for more than 90 days. In case of Permanent Resident (F-5) or Marriage Migrant (F-6) visa holders, NHI coverage applies from the date of entry.

¹¹ Application of a minimum average insurance contribution of the insured, and limitations on the scope of household recognition other than spouses and minor children.

¹² The Constitutional Court of Korea has also affirmed that these provisions are reasonable measures to ensure the sustainability of the social insurance system (26 September 2023, 2019Hun-Ma1165).

encourages payment of overdue amounts of foreign nationals in arrears by granting extensions of stay of up to six months, and allows them to remain in the country where they make instalment payments, considering humanitarian grounds and efforts to repay. (Annex 16)

Housing

21. The Government provides a special supply of national housing¹³ to multicultural households that meet certain requirements under Article 35 of the *Rules on Housing Supply*.

Multicultural policies

22. The Government plans to expand the scope of multicultural policies' beneficiaries to "migrant background families," including foreign national households, to reflect the increasing diversity of migrant inflows. It will assign dedicated caseworkers for migrant background families in family centers and provide support for language education, learning, and communication and exchange programs by using community resources.

Reply to paragraph 8(d)

23. Pursuant to Article 5 (2) of the *Act on the Management of Outdoor Advertisements and the Promotion of Outdoor Advertisement Industry*, expressions containing racial or gender discrimination are prohibited. In November 2025, to strengthen sanctions against hate speech for political gain, the Government developed "Guidelines on Prohibited Advertisements" and distributed them to local governments.
24. Concerning hate speech online, measures such as deletion or blocking are taken through the deliberation and corrective requests of the Korea Media and Communications Standards Commission (KOCSC) under the *Regulations on Deliberation of Information and Communications*. Following the amended *Act on Promotion of Information and Communications Network Utilization and Information Protection* ("*Information and Communications Network Act*") in January 2026, hate speech has been classified as "unlawful information"¹⁴ under the Act. Accordingly, an enforcement framework for corrective requests and orders has been established, and obligations for platform operators to take necessary measures have been codified.

¹³ Housing with an exclusive floor area of 85m² or less, constructed or funded by the State, local governments, or the Korea Land and Housing Corporation.

¹⁴ Article 44-7 (1) 2-2 of the *Information and Communications Network Act* was newly introduced, under which information that publicly incites direct violence or discrimination against, or promotes hatred toward a specific individual or group "on the grounds of race, nationality, region, gender, disability, age, social status, etc.," thereby undermining the dignity of such individual or group as human beings, is included in the category of "unlawful information" prohibited from circulation through information and communications networks.

25. The Government will cooperate with the NHRCK to strengthen responses to hate and promote a culture of respect for human rights.

Equal rights of men and women

Reply to paragraph 9

Cross-establishment wage comparisons

26. Since 2025, the Government has been developing a framework to introduce a “wage transparency system for equal employment” by amending the *Framework Act on Gender Equality*, to establish a basis for disclosing gender-disaggregated data on wages and employment, particularly in the public sector¹⁵ and large private enterprises. The disclosure items will include the status of workers by type of employment to identify gendered employment structures and discriminatory factors in both regular and non-regular employment.

Public childcare infrastructure

27. The Government continues to expand support for the Childcare Support Service, where childcare providers visit households (with children aged 12 or under) who experience caregiving gaps, including double-income families. To enhance the professionalism and reliability of childcare services, the Government will introduce a national qualification system for childcare workers and a registration system for private childcare service providers.¹⁶ (Annex, Table 17)
28. Under the *Act on the Promotion of Creation of Family-Friendly Social Environment*, the Government grants certification to companies and public institutions that exemplarily operate family-friendly systems, including support for childbirth and child-rearing and the use of a flexible working system.¹⁷ To encourage company participation, the Government identifies and provides incentives reflecting corporate preferences,¹⁸ while public institutions are legally required to obtain certification. (Annex, Table 18)

Steps to reduce women’s career interruptions

29. In the Fourth Basic Plan for Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-interrupted Women

¹⁵ The public sector regularly discloses gender-disaggregated wage and employment data and implements institution-specific improvement measures based on these data.

¹⁶ Amendment to the *Child Care Support Act* on 22 April 2025, effective from 23 April 2026

¹⁷ Family-friendly certified companies and institutions: 6,502 in 2024 → 6,971 in 2025

¹⁸ Deferment of tax and customs duty investigations, preferential interest rates from major banks

(2025-2029),¹⁹ the Government focused on strengthening support for economic participation across all life stages by expanding the policy targets from women with career interruptions to include youth, middle-aged, and older persons.

30. The *Act on the Promotion of Economic Activities and Prevention of Career Interruption of Women* has been amended to replace the term “career-interrupted women” with “women with work experience” to promote women’s economic rights and shift social perceptions, and to guarantee women’s right not to face discrimination in economic activities due to career interruption.²⁰
31. The Government pursues policies to prevent women’s career interruptions, support their return to work, and promote long-term employment of married and middle-aged women through measures such as the family-friendly corporation certification system. It also implements diverse programs to promote women’s economic participation through the “Women’s Re-employment Center.” (Annex, Tables 19-21)

Parental leave system

32. While the female employment rate in ROK has generally increased,²¹ career interruptions (the M-shaped Curve) continue among women in their 30s and 40s due to the low use of work-family balance support schemes by men and difficulties in balancing work and family because of childbirth and childrearing.
33. The parental leave system applies by law to all workers employed at workplaces with at least one employee. To support SMEs, facing difficulties in utilizing the system, new subsidies for sharing duties of employees on parental leave and for substitute employees have been introduced. From January to September 2025, the shares of men and SME employees among all parental leave beneficiaries reached record highs.²²
34. The Government has increased the budget for work-family balance support schemes from KRW 2.5 trillion in 2024 to KRW 4.1 trillion in 2025, while also improving conditions to facilitate their use by SMEs. It will also strengthen public outreach to ensure that working parents and businesses are fully informed and able to use these measures. (Annex, Table 22)

Reply to paragraph 10

¹⁹ Jointly established by the MOGEF and the MOEL under the *Act on the Promotion of Economic Activities and Prevention of Career Interruption of Women*.

²⁰ Effective from 1 July 2026.

²¹ Female labor force participation rate (2023): OECD average 63.2%; ROK 61.4%; Japan 73.3%; United States 67.5%; Germany 73.6%

²² The number of parental leave benefit recipients increased by 37.0% year on year. From January to September 2025, 36.8% of parental leave users were men, while 58.2% were SME employees.

Women's representation

35. The Government has established the Third Plan for Enhancing Women's Representation in the Public Sector (2023-2027), setting and monitoring targets for the proportion of women in senior and managerial positions across central government ministries, local governments, and public institutions. Also, it is required that any particular gender does not exceed 6/10 of the number of members commissioned when organizing committees under central or local governments,²³ and annual monitoring and recommendations for improvement are carried out. For director-level officials at central government headquarters and managerial-level officials at local governments, the 2027 target for women's representation was achieved ahead of schedule in 2024. (Annex, Table 23)
36. In 2024, the permitted uses of expenses for the advancement of women in politics were specified in the *Political Funds Act*, and in cases of misuse, an amount equivalent to twice the misused subsidies from the national treasury is to be retrieved (or reduced). In addition, the *Rules on the Management of Political Funds* provides that, where the total personnel expenditures exceed the remaining amount within the expenses for the advancement of women in politics, the excess shall not be recognized as such expenses, thereby ensuring that the fund is used for its intended purposes. (Annex, Table 24)

Addressing gender-based violence, including digital sexual violence

37. In December 2024, the *Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Sexual Crimes* was amended to enable undercover and covert investigations into digital sexual crimes, even in cases where the victim is an adult. Its Enforcement Decree was subsequently amended to prescribe the procedures and methods for such investigations and the designation of counselling and protective facilities for victims' safety.
38. The Government has established dedicated investigative systems within metropolitan and provincial government for digital sexual violence crimes. Based on these systems, it enforces an intensive crackdown on the distribution of sexual exploitation materials and illegal sexual content, the creation and operation of distribution networks, and purchasing activities. Also, the *Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Sexual Crimes* was amended²⁴ to allow the police, when they identify illegal or false video products disseminated online, to request their deletion or blocking from the KOCSC and information and communications

²³ Article 21(2) of the *Framework Act on Gender Equality*.

²⁴ Effective from 21 June 2025

service providers and inform victims of the relevant procedures. Accordingly, from April to December 2025, a dedicated team newly established within the National Police Agency requested the deletion or blocking of 9,004 URLs of sexual exploitation materials from the KOCSC and 10,657 from domestic and international service providers. (Annex, Tables 25-27)

39. The Government amended the *Sexual Violence Prevention and Victims Protection Act* to expand the scope of deletion support from illegally recorded materials to include victims' personal information. In June 2025, it also developed and distributed an integrated manual to strengthen coordination between victims of relevant institutions (e.g., schools and military units) and victim support organizations. In December 2025, AI-based proactive response systems were established to introduce technologies for detecting and tracking deep-fake sexual crime materials and to automatically detect and report online sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. In September 2025, the Government adopted inter-ministerial joint measures to enhance protection and support for victims of stalking and dating violence and diversified the types of emergency housing support facilities for such victims.²⁵ It will establish an inter-ministerial "integrated support task force for victims of digital sexual crimes" around May 2026 to strengthen the overall response.
40. To protect and support victims, the Government provides multifaceted assistance, such as the payment of relief fund for criminal injuries through prosecutors' offices, financial support (e.g., living expenses and medical expenses) through crime victim support centers, psychological counselling through Smile Centers, the removal of digital sexual crime videos through integrated support centers for crime victims, and other legal services for victims.²⁶ (Annex, Table 28-30)
41. Together with metropolitan and provincial offices of education, the Government has taken its own measures by establishing and operating dedicated units for gender-based violence in schools, and operates response systems in cooperation with relevant institutions, including prevention education on digital sexual violence, victim support, and measures against perpetrators. Given that children and adolescents primarily communicate through social media and are therefore more vulnerable, the Government strengthened student education. (Annex, Table 31)

²⁵ Fixed-type shelter → Fixed-type shelter and shared accommodations.

²⁶ Legal counselling and litigation aid by Korea Legal Aid Corporation; legal counselling, referrals to relevant institutions, and assistance with legal document preparations by Legal Home Doctor.

42. Under the *Telecommunications Business Act*, the Korea Media and Communications Commission (KMCC) imposes obligations on service providers of a certain scale to take technical and managerial measures to prevent the circulation of illegal filmed materials, monitors the implementation of these obligations, and conducts real-time monitoring. The Government will support the legislative process of amending the Act to require service providers to request a review after taking temporary measures when suspected illegal content is identified. It will also ensure that the *Enforcement Decree of the Act on the Establishment and Operation of KMCC* requires service providers subject to corrective requests to take circulation-prevention measures within 24 hours. It will expand the scope of comparison, identification, and publication restriction measures to include images and establish deep-fake content detection and monitoring systems.

Introduction of “crime of sexual intercourse without consent”

43. It relates to the fundamental legal framework governing sexual violence offences in ROK. Therefore, it requires sufficient public discussion and careful consideration of the issues related to the burden of proof and procedural burdens in criminal proceedings, as well as diverse views on how to protect the right to sexual self-determination.

C. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (Arts. 6-15)

Right to work

Reply to paragraph 11(a)

44. The Government has strengthened an employment support system prioritizing transition and inclusion over protection. Mandatory employment quotas are imposed on public (3.8%) and private (3.1%) workplaces, enforced through measures such as contributory charges and public disclosure of non-compliant employers. In 2025, the disclosure system was revised to exclude entities that have made substantial improvements in the employment of persons with disabilities. Also, the Government plans to amend the *Act on the Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities* and its Enforcement Decree to gradually raise the mandatory employment rates from 2027.
45. The Korea Employment Agency for Persons with Disabilities implements the following employment support measures:
- i. tailored training and job development for persons with developmental or severe disabilities,

- ii. employment support services (Employment Success Package, supported employment, and internships),
- iii. support for job retention, appropriate job support through human assistance (helpers),
- iv. material assistance (assistive technology devices and commuting cost support).

As of 2026, KRW 1.0137 trillion has been allocated for disability employment.

- 46. The authorization system for exclusion from the minimum wage application is operated within the minimum necessary scope, mainly in vocational rehabilitation facilities under the *Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities*, considering the employment stability of persons with severe disabilities who have difficulty working in general workplaces due to their very limited working capacity. The Government has established a task force involving government officials, organizations of persons with disabilities, and academic experts to reform this system, and continued its review by announcing joint measures with relevant ministries to support low-wage workers with disabilities in vocational rehabilitation facilities.
- 47. The Government introduced a transition support program in 2020 to enable persons with disabilities exempted from the minimum wage application to obtain jobs paying at least the minimum wage. Many have since received employment transition encouragement benefits, participated in transition training, and moved into jobs paying at least the minimum wage. In 2026, the budget was increased, and a transition success subsidy was introduced to provide incentives to vocational rehabilitation facilities whose workers successfully transitioned into the general labor market.
- 48. The Government will expand access to quality job opportunities by increasing AI training opportunities and supporting companies to meet the mandatory employment quota, while also enhancing human and material support to improve the quality of employment.

Reply to paragraph 11(b)

Migrant workers

- 49. For their stable employment and local integration, the Government provides multilingual counselling services, assistance in accessing remedies for labor-related rights, and Korean language education. (Annex, 32)
- 50. The Government is reviewing measures to ease the requirements for migrant workers to change workplaces. In 2025, the MOEL commissioned a research study, shared views with labor and management, and conducted on-site assessments. It plans to submit an amendment to the *Act on the Employment of Foreign Workers* to the National Assembly in the first half of

2026, after fully consulting with labor and management representatives and relevant experts.

51. The Government operates a system that allows foreign workers holding non-professional employment (E-9) visas who have accumulated skills through long-term employment to transition to employment (E-7) visas, which permit long-term residence, family invitation, and more stable settlement in ROK.

Reply to paragraph 11(c)

52. The Government has continuously implemented diverse measures to protect the labor rights and interests of on-the-job trainees and to prevent safety accidents. They include amending relevant laws and regulations, appointing school labor attorneys, providing and monitoring education on labor rights protection in on-the-job training and occupational safety and health, carrying out pre-on-site due diligence and company coaching, and strengthening the eligibility criteria for host companies, developing tailored, common operational manuals for each group of stakeholders, enhancing teachers' capacity through training, and operating on-the-job-training consultants. It will also support the establishment of industrial disaster prevention systems, including "technical guidance and the establishment of the occupational safety and health systems," through inter-ministerial cooperation. (Annex, Tables 33-34)

Reply to paragraph 11(d)

53. The Government has continuously increased the budget for the National Employment Support System.²⁷ In February 2024, the law was amended to allow job-search promotion allowance to be reduced rather than suspended based on the level of income, even where recipients engage in income-generating activities such as part-time work (less than 30 hours per week). From 2026, the amount of such benefits has increased.²⁸ However, to prioritize those with a greater need for support, within a limited budget, criteria such as work experience within the past two years are applied. Nevertheless, individuals without prior work experience may still receive employment support services. (Annex, Table 35)

Right to just and favorable conditions of work

Reply to paragraph 12

Minimum wage

²⁷ KRW 1,003.4 billion (including reserve funds, 2024) → KRW 1,010.9 billion (including supplementary revised budgets, 2025) → KRW 1,012.8 billion (2026)

²⁸ KRW 500,000 → 600,000 per month.

54. The Minimum Wage Commission²⁹ uses analytical data on the actual living costs for unmarried workers living alone as basic data for deliberation to ensure that the minimum wage is set at a level sufficient to guarantee an adequate standard of living for workers, and provides cost-of-living data by household size as reference materials. The minimum wage is determined by considering factors such as the income distribution ratio, labor productivity, wages of quasi-employees, and labor market conditions. Deliberation materials and outcomes are made public on the Commission's website.
55. Wage gaps are narrowing, with a decline in the share of low-wage workers and a reduction in the wage quintile ratio. (Annex, Table 36)

Labor protections for platform and non-standard workers

56. The Government seeks to introduce the “worker presumption system” and enact the *Basic Act on the Rights of Working People*, which covers all persons who provide labor. The Act clarifies universal rights applicable to all working people, such as the right to fair contracts and non-discrimination. Pursuant to this Act, the Government will improve core protection systems so that platform and non-standard workers can work under fair conditions. As of October 2025, 872,000 persons in special types of employment and platform workers are covered by employment insurance, following efforts to close coverage gaps by integrating income data from the National Tax Service into the employment insurance system.
57. The scope of protection under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* was expanded from 9 to 15 categories of workers in special types of employment since 2020 and will be further expanded. In 2025, a new program was introduced to support costs related to strengthening occupational safety for such workers and to promote accident prevention activities by private associations and organizations. It also plans to establish a health examination system for such workers engaged in night work, including delivery workers. In 2026, new financial support programs will be introduced, including free legal aid for non-standard workers' recovery of unpaid remuneration, and the operation of private bodies to provide rights-protection programs for platform and non-standard workers.

Reply to paragraph 13

Addressing gender pay gaps and working conditions in women-dominated sectors

58. The Government has adopted and implemented a national policy task of improving working

²⁹ Composed of 9 members each from employees, employers, and the public interest.

conditions for employees in social welfare facilities. Also, in December 2025, the *Act on the Improvement of Treatment and Status of Social Workers* was amended.³⁰ (Annex, 37)

Working condition monitoring and labor inspections

59. The Government provides workplaces with consulting on improving employment practices and preventing discrimination to promote cooperation between main contractors and subcontractors. It assesses working conditions, recommends improvements where necessary, and monitors their implementation.
60. The Government conducts annual labor inspections of workplaces with fewer than 30 employees (including those with fewer than five) that are considered at higher risk of weak labor management.³¹ On-site labor guidance and inspections have been conducted, focusing on basic labor standards³² that small businesses must understand, including consultations for 7,294 workplaces with fewer than 20 employees (including 3,254 with fewer than five employees, 44.6%) in 2025. In particular, on-site labor guidance is carried out based on the “Labor Relations Law Compliance Self-Checklist,” and corrective orders are issued for wage arrears and minimum wage violations. Also, alongside on-site guidance and inspections, the Government collaborates with relevant associations and organizations; local councils of workers, employers, residents, and governments; and local governments to conduct outreach activities such as meetings and briefings.

Labor rights

Reply to paragraph 14(a)

61. In September 2025, the Government amended the *Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act* (“*Trade Union Act*”)³³ to promote dialogue and cooperation between main contractors and subcontractors and to establish a basis for reducing labor market disparities. With the expanded definition of “employer” under the amended Act, main contractors, who are in a position to exercise substantive and specific control over, or make decisions concerning, the specific terms and conditions of employment, are deemed employers under the *Trade Union Act* within that scope and are therefore subject to bargaining obligations.

³⁰ The key amendments include, adding the State, in addition to local governments, as an entity required to endeavor to comply with *Guidelines on the Remunerations of Social Workers, etc.*; requiring compliance with the *Labor Standards Act* unless otherwise specifically provided; and prohibiting acts violating the human rights of workers.

³¹ In 2025, 19,407 workplaces with fewer than 30 employees (including 2,721 workplaces with fewer than 5 employees, 14%) underwent inspections.

³² Overdue wages, minimum wages, labor contracts, issuance of written wage statements, etc.

³³ Effective from March 2026

62. In addition, the scope of industrial disputes under Article 2(5) of the *Trade Union Act* was expanded to include: management decisions that are closely related to working conditions and necessarily entail changes to those conditions;³⁴ and cases where an employer clearly violates a collective agreement concerning certain working conditions.³⁵
63. Article 2(4)(d) of the *Trade Union Act* was repealed to ensure that a trade union's autonomy and identity are not denied solely because it includes members other than workers. (Annex, Table 38)

Reply to paragraph 14(b)

64. Under Article 4 of the *Trade Union Act*,³⁶ justifiable industrial actions are, in principle, not subject to criminal punishment. The Supreme Court also applies the *Criminal Act* strictly in labor-related cases. Previously, decisions such as layoffs, which affect workers' status and working conditions, were not included within the scope of industrial disputes. Therefore, collective bargaining was restricted, and industrial action was deemed unlawful in its purpose, leading to excessive claims for damages. Currently, the Act has been amended to include matters concerning the determination of working conditions, managerial decisions affecting working conditions, and clear violations of collective agreements within the scope of industrial disputes.
65. To prevent situations in which excessive liability is imposed on union members for damages arising from unlawful industrial action, thereby undermining trade union activities and threatening workers' livelihoods, the Government amended Article 3 of the *Trade Union Act* and prevented employers from abusing their right to claim damages against trade unions or their members. (Annex, Table 39)
66. Even where claims for damages are brought, legislation provides that individual union members bear liability only to a limited extent based on their authority and responsibilities, in line with the principle of fairness, considering their position and role within the union, the circumstances and extent of participation in the industrial action, and their contribution to the damage.

Reply to paragraph 14(c)

67. See paragraphs 61-62 of the fifth periodic report.

³⁴ Layoffs, etc.

³⁵ A clear violation of a collective agreement, including matters on wages, working hours, safety and health, disaster relief, etc.

³⁶ Article 20 (Justifiable Acts) of the *Criminal Act* shall apply to justifiable acts which are conducted to achieve the purpose of Article 1 as collective bargaining, industrial action and other activities by trade unions.

Reply to paragraph 14(d)

68. See paragraph 59 of the fifth periodic report.
69. Industrial action by trade unions in itself does not constitute a social disaster under the *Framework Act on the Management of Disasters and Safety*. It is classified as a social disaster only where such action paralyzes the national core infrastructure and is likely to cause any harm to the lives, bodies, and property of citizens, or to the national economy. Damage caused by the “paralysis of the national core infrastructure” due to industrial action has been managed as a statutory disaster since the enactment and enforcement of the *Framework Act on the Management of Disasters and Safety* in March 2004. Before the 2024 amendment to its *Enforcement Decree*, disaster types such as “health and medical accidents” were specified under the Decree, while detailed provisions were set out in crisis management manuals. The amendment did not introduce a new provision but was intended to address issues such as violation of the principle of legal clarity and terminology inconsistencies between the Act and the Enforcement Decree.

Rights to social security

Reply to paragraph 15

Basic Livelihood Security System

70. The Government has raised the standard median income,³⁷ which is used as the selection criterion for 80 government programs such as the Basic Livelihood Security System, by a record-high 6.51%. Accordingly, the maximum monthly livelihood benefit³⁸ also increased and exceeded KRW 2 million for the first time.
71. In January 2024, the criteria of obligatory providers were substantially relaxed for medical benefit recipient households with persons with severe disabilities, and the property criteria of such providers were improved by increasing the deductible amount applied to their fundamental property. In January 2025, the high-income and high-property thresholds³⁹ for obligatory providers of livelihood benefits were raised. In January 2026, the Government abolished the family support, an amount deemed to be provided by an obligatory provider of

³⁷ Standard median income (four-person household): KRW 6.098 million (2025) → KRW 6.495 million (2026); Increase rate of median income: 1.16% (2018) → 2.68% (2021) → 5.47% (2023) → 6.51% (2026).

³⁸ Maximum monthly livelihood benefit (32% of standard median income, four-person household): KRW 2.078 million (effective January 1, 2026).

³⁹ Annual income threshold: KRW 100 million → KRW 130 million; General property threshold: KRW 900 million → KRW 1.2 billion.

medical benefits to recipients for living expenses. It will relax the criteria of obligatory providers in phases.

72. Over the past 18 years, despite increases in prices and medical expenses, the copayment of medical benefits has remained fixed at a flat rate (KRW 1,000–2,000). To ensure the sustainability of the system, the Government sought to shift it to a percentage-based system in which outpatient copayments vary in proportion to medical use. Also, to guarantee access to healthcare, it prepared complementary measures by raising the health maintenance allowance,⁴⁰ setting a ceiling on medical expenses per visit,⁴¹ and exempting copayments for outpatient and pharmacy services for patients with severe dementia or schizophrenia. However, during the prior announcement of legislation, concerns were raised again that the reform could increase medical expenses for vulnerable groups, so the Government has suspended and is reviewing the reform process.

Health insurance coverage

73. As ROK is entering a super-aged society and demand for healthcare is projected to increase, it is necessary to secure stable sources of revenue. Accordingly, amendment bills to the *National Health Insurance Act* and the *National Health Promotion Act* have been introduced in the National Assembly to abolish the sunset clause on government subsidies for insurance finance and to clarify the legal criteria for calculating such subsidies.
74. In addition, as part of national policy tasks to reduce medical expenses by target group and life stage, the Government is pursuing a national task of strengthening health insurance coverage, including lowering copayments for nursing expenses of long-term care hospitals, reducing copayment rates for persons who have suffered from a rare incurable disease, and expanding insurance coverage for dental implants. The Government plans to reduce patients' copayments by applying health insurance coverage for nursing expenses especially for long-term care hospitals, expand the application of special coverage for newly designated rare diseases, and broaden insurance benefits for dental implants for seniors.
75. The Government plans to gradually raise the selection criteria and benefit level for the livelihood benefit, currently set at 32% of the standard median income (as of 2025), to 35% by 2030. It will also prepare comprehensive measures for medical benefits.
76. Considering the shortfall in government subsidies relative to the statutory subsidy rate for the

⁴⁰ Monthly outpatient co-payment subsidy: KRW 6,000 → 12,000

⁴¹ Outpatient cap: KRW 20,000; Pharmacy cap: KRW 50,000

health insurance, the Government will continue to consult with fiscal authorities to ensure stable expansion of government funding.⁴²

Reply to paragraph 15(a)

77. Under the *Basic Pension Act*, the Government adjusts the amount of basic pension benefits annually to reflect inflation. Through the adequacy assessment conducted every five years, it also evaluates the appropriateness of basic pension benefits by comprehensively reviewing factors such as the living standards of eligible recipients and adjusts the amount accordingly.

Reply to paragraph 15(b)

Close coverage gaps in the pension system

78. The Government operates various pension premium support programs for vulnerable groups to extend the participation period in the national pension scheme.⁴³ From 1 January 2026, it has provided subsidies to individually insured persons below a certain income level, regardless of whether they have resumed the payment.
79. The Government provides information on tailored schemes to increase pension participation among those who are not engaged in income-generating activities and excluded from coverage of the National Pension Scheme, such as youth and full-time homemakers. Also, to better recognize social contributions and strengthen old-age income security, it plans to expand childbirth and military service credits⁴⁴ from 2026.

Reply to paragraph 15(c)

80. For information regarding the NHI for foreign nationals, refer to paragraph 20 above.
81. Among foreign nationals residing in ROK, overseas Koreans may register as persons with disabilities and access related services under Article 32-2 of the *Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities*. However, for persons with disabilities who are not covered by the above Act, the social security system is applied based on the principle of reciprocity under Article 8 of the *Framework Act on Social Security*. (Annex, Table 40)

Protection of the family and children

Reply to paragraph 16

82. To prevent and detect child abuse early, the Government continues conducting public

⁴² Government subsidies: KRW 12.6 trillion (2025) → 12.7 trillion (2026)

⁴³ Low-income workers, daily hire workers, farmers and fishers, and low-income individually insured persons.

⁴⁴ (Childbirth credit) from the second child → from the first child with an additional 12 months of coverage without the cap; (Military service credit) 6 months → up to 12 months, reflecting the actual period of military service.

awareness campaigns and programs to identify children in crisis. From 2024, it has also promoted a pilot program that provides preventive support, including counselling and training, to families even when a reported child abuse case is determined not to constitute abuse.

83. The Government is expanding infrastructure, such as specialized child protection agencies and shelters for abused children. In 2025, it established a legal basis for regional psychological support teams to provide systematic and professional psychological treatment for child victims in highly complex cases. Also, it is strengthening integrated family support interventions, including home-visit family recovery programs and specialized psychological treatment supports, to promote the recovery of child victims and their families and prevent re-abuse.
84. Each year, around 10 joint training sessions are conducted to strengthen the capacity of personnel addressing child abuse, including police officers, dedicated officials for child abuse, and staff of specialized child protection agencies and shelters for abused children. These trainings enhance their legal expertise and on-site response capacity, while also strengthening inter-agency coordination.
85. To support child victims, the Government listens to experts' opinions through child abuse case management meetings held at district prosecutors' offices and works to ensure early response and prevention.

Reply to paragraph 16(a)

86. The Government has pursued the “home-type protection first” policy to minimize the duration of separation and to prioritize home-type protection even where children are unavoidably separated from their original family.
87. As of 2024, there were 7,623 foster homes and 9,355 children under foster care in ROK. Through 18 foster care centers operating at the metropolitan and provincial levels nationwide, the Government provides case management and refresher courses, and offers child benefits and cash support to all foster homes under the Basic Livelihood Security system. Also, it covers accident insurance premiums⁴⁵ and the costs of psychological tests and treatment⁴⁶ for children under foster care. For children requiring specialized care, such as victims of abuse, infants, and children with ADHD, it operates a “professional foster care” system to

⁴⁵ Approx. KRW 68,500 per person.

⁴⁶ As of 2025, KRW 200,000 per test and up to KRW 200,000 per month for treatment.

select and train foster parents with appropriate caregiving capacity and additionally provide professional child protection allowances.⁴⁷

88. As part of national policy tasks, the Government aims to strengthen State responsibility for the recruitment, placement, and monitoring of foster homes, and it will provide national subsidies for foster care centers, mandate compliance with the recommended child benefit standards, and enhance metropolitan-level responsibility for activating home-type protection.

Reply to paragraph 16(b)

89. The Government operates the “e-Program for Children’s Happiness”⁴⁸ to proactively identify children in crisis, rather than a response based on post-report punishment in child abuse cases. An AI model using 44 types of social security big data is used to identify at-risk children and three-year-old children raised at home. Based on this, local officials at the *eup/myeon/dong* level conduct home visits to check their safety, link them to welfare services where necessary, and report suspected abuse.
90. Various initiatives to promote a culture of preventing child abuse have been carried out, including annual commemorations of the Day (19 November) and the Week for Prevention of Child Abuse (19–25 November).

Reply to paragraph 16(c)

91. Under the current *Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Child Abuse Crimes*, (“*Child Abuse Crime Punishment Act*”) when a child abuse crime such as the crime of murder by child abuse (or attempted murder) occurs, the authorities take emergency measures, ad hoc measures, and issue child victim protection orders to immediately separate the child abuse offenders from the child victim and prevent the recurrence.⁴⁹ Recent amendments have introduced the crime of attempted murder by child abuse to subject offenders to aggravated punishment, and prosecutors shall apply to a court for the adjudication of loss of parental authority or the trial for the replacement of a guardian.⁵⁰ Also, an emergency measure entrusting a child victim to his or her relatives has been introduced,⁵¹ and procedures for its implementation have been established in subordinate statutes or regulations, which are currently in force. A bill to amend the *Child Abuse Crime Punishment Act*, which includes

⁴⁷ KRW 1 million per month.

⁴⁸ From 1 January 2024 to 8 December 2025, officials visited approximately 211,000 households with children, referred about 58,000 households to welfare services, and reported 297 cases of suspected abuse for investigation.

⁴⁹ Articles 12, 19, and 47 of the *Child Abuse Crime Punishment Act*.

⁵⁰ Ibid, Articles 4(3) and 9(1).

⁵¹ Ibid, Article 12(1), (5).

cases of murder (or attempted murder) of a child within the scope of “child abuse crimes,” is currently under deliberation at the National Assembly.

92. When a filicide-suicide case is reported, the police previously notified local governments only after confirming the suspected abuse. Since September 2025, guidelines have been improved to require immediate notification when such incidents occur. Accordingly, where a surviving child is found at the scene, the police promptly notify relevant agencies regardless of whether abuse is suspected, so that the child and their family can receive timely financial and social support.
93. Surviving children may receive counseling and psychological treatment from a specialized child protection agency, as determined by local governments. When necessary, they may be separated from their family and placed under protection, and provided with public support, including basic livelihood support, medical benefits, and childcare expenses.
94. Meanwhile, to enable in-depth analysis of suspected child abuse-related deaths and the development of effective prevention policies, the amended *Child Welfare Act* will take effect in August 2026, which allows a Special Committee for the Analysis of Suspected Child Abuse Death to be established and operated and the Minister of Health and Welfare to analyze suspected child abuse-related deaths.

Right to an adequate standard of living

Reply to paragraph 17

95. The Government provides public rental housing at affordable rents to support stable housing for vulnerable and low-income groups. In particular, it supports housing-vulnerable groups living in substandard housing, such as *gosiwon* and *jjokbang*, to relocate to public or private rental housing. It proactively identifies eligible individuals in each community through housing welfare centers and assists the entire process from relocation to settlement. Persons with mental illness are also eligible for relocation to public rental housing where they fall within housing-vulnerable groups.
96. To promote housing stability for low-income and vulnerable groups who lack stable housing and cannot afford private rental market rents, the Government supplies approximately 40,000 units of newly constructed public rental housing each year, and also provides various types of rental housing, including purchase-lease and *jeonse*-lease types. (Annex, Table 41)

Reply to paragraph 18

A national housing law and policy framework

97. The *Framework Act on Residence*, enacted in 2015, sets out the basic principles for housing policy. Pursuant to this Act, the Government implements policies such as the formulation of comprehensive housing plans, the supply of rental housing, improvement of residential environments, subsidization of housing expenses, and support for the housing of the underprivileged.

The inclusion of youth under 18 in the definition of homelessness

98. Abolishing the age limit in the definition of homelessness could result in overlapping responsibilities and jurisdictional issues among competent authorities, causing confusion in the field and delays in providing timely services. Homeless youth identified through street patrols are referred to youth protection facilities such as youth shelters for proper assistance. Low-income youth may also receive financial assistance through the special support for youth in crisis.

Application of rent caps or habitability standards to public housing

99. Public rental houses are subject to rent caps based on standard rent and deposit criteria established by housing type. Rents are calculated based on the market price of local rents and coefficients by target beneficiary groups and income brackets. Through limits on deposits and rents, the Government supports housing stability for low-income and vulnerable groups without homes. Also, public rental houses are supplied in compliance with habitability standards, such as the minimum residential standards. (Annex, Table 42)

Right to health

Reply to paragraph 19

Public healthcare

100. The Government plans to establish a public hospital expansion plan under the *Third Basic Plan for Public Health and Medical Services* (2026–2030), considering regional healthcare supply systems and project plans. It will also consult with relevant ministries to improve the preliminary feasibility study system, reflecting the specific characteristics of public hospitals.
101. The Government supports public hospitals' facilities, equipment, personnel expenses, and operating costs to fulfill the public-interest functions. It will continue to support management innovation through consulting to ensure their stable operations, and will consider reforms to the payment system.

102. To attract medical professionals to regional, essential, and public healthcare fields, the Government promotes the contract-based regional physician quota system and senior doctor support programs, while also preparing to introduce a community doctor system and public medical schools to train professionals specialized in these fields.

Deinstitutionalization and independent living for persons with disabilities

103. Since 2022, the Government has implemented a “Pilot Project for Supporting Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities in the Community (government-funded, 2022-2026)” to guarantee their right to choose the place of residence based on their will and support independent living in the community. In the course of evaluating the pilot project and preparing subordinate legislation under the Act on Support for Independent Living in the Community and Housing Transition of Persons with Disabilities, the Government will establish a “Basic Plan for Supporting Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities in the Community” through consultations with experts, disability organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. Also, it has piloted a housing program for persons with mental illness residing in psychiatric institutions and similar facilities, to support their independent living.

Mental health

104. The Government publishes an annual National Mental Health Survey of Korea and produces relevant statistics. Since 2021, it has operated a Mental Health Information Portal to provide information on mental illnesses and mental health-related institutions and post the developed educational content on mental health. Also, the 2025 National Suicide Prevention Strategy⁵² has been developed and carried out, and the Inter-Ministerial Suicide Prevention Policy Office has been launched under the Office for Government Policy Coordination in December 2025.

Community-based mental health services

105. Since 2023, the Government has expanded the community-based integrated mental health improvement services and increased staffing levels at local mental health welfare centers. In 2025, an additional 102 personnel were assigned to crisis intervention teams⁵³ at those centers, and in 2026, the annual personnel cost per team member was raised by approximately 21%, from KRW 38.32 million to KRW 46.33 million.

⁵² Strengthening immediate and emergency intervention for suicide attempters, establishing inter-agency and cross-ministerial cooperation mechanisms, reinforcing local government and frontline response systems, and enhancing data-based framework, etc.

⁵³ When a psychiatric emergency occurs, these teams are dispatched with the police and fire services to assess the individual’s mental health status and refer them to medical institutions and community-based services.

106. The budget for the community-based integrated mental health improvement services⁵⁴ was increased from KRW 32.7 billion in 2024 to KRW 34.4 billion in 2026. Mental health-related budgets⁵⁵ rose from KRW 443.2 billion in 2023 to KRW 553.8 billion in 2026.

Reply to paragraph 20

Hospitalization system for persons with mental disorders

107. Involuntary hospitalization of persons with mental illness (including protective and administrative hospitalization) is subject to procedures under the *Act on the Improvement of Mental Health and the Support for Welfare Services for Mental Patients*, including diagnoses made by two psychiatrists from different mental medical institutions within two weeks of admission and a review by the committee for examination as to the legitimacy of admission within one month from the date of hospitalization. In case of voluntary hospitalization, where a mentally ill person requests discharge, the individual shall be discharged without delay, and the institution shall ascertain whether the person hospitalized wishes to be discharged, every two months from the date of hospitalization or admission. (Annex, Table 43)

Access to health care for undocumented migrants and refugees

108. The Government has provided relevant information and strengthened guidance to ensure that asylum seekers can access basic support, including health and medical services.⁵⁶ It has allocated a separate budget to cover health examination expenses and emergency medical assistance for them.
109. The Government has assisted with medical expenses for foreign workers who are not eligible for existing health coverage schemes, such as health insurance or medical benefits, as well as their spouses and children under 18, and for asylum seekers and their children under 18, when hospitalization or surgery is required.⁵⁷ (Annex, Table 44)

Decriminalization of abortion and integration into the healthcare system

110. During the discussion on the decriminalization of abortion, diverse views have been expressed on issues such as consistency with the legal system and methods of abortion, and therefore,

⁵⁴ The expansion of Mind Relief Bus operations, public psychiatric beds, and recovery support programs, etc.

⁵⁵ Psychiatric hospitals, mental health welfare centers, and suicide prevention programs, etc.

⁵⁶ In March 2023, the Government produced and distributed an electronic guidebook for asylum seekers and recognized refugees in critical foreign languages (Arabic, Burmese, Maithili, Hindi, and Persian), thereby improving access to information for non-English-speaking refugees. In October 2023, it produced and disseminated multilingual information leaflets (Arabic, Kazakh, and Hindi) providing comprehensive guidance on support schemes, including living allowances, work authorization, housing, medical expenses, and education.

⁵⁷ In principle, outpatient treatment is not covered; however, outpatient care related to hospitalization or surgery may be supported within a limited scope. Medical expenses for prenatal check-ups and outpatient treatment for children under 18 are also covered.

further discussion is required. In March 2026, the National Assembly’s Health and Welfare Committee commenced its review of the relevant bills, and further amendment bills continue to be introduced. The Government will actively support legislative discussions on these amendments.

111. In cases of abortion that fall under Article 14 of the *Mother and Child Health Act*,⁵⁸ the NHI coverage is applied (2,637 cases in 2024). Expanding health insurance coverage to all cases of abortion would require social consensus and should be determined through deliberations by the Health Insurance Policy Deliberative Committee under the *National Health Insurance Act*.⁵⁹

Right to education

Reply to paragraph 21

Addressing inequalities in education access and outcomes

112. The MOE provides education activity expenses, textbook costs, admission fees, and tuition for students from households with an income at or below 50% of the standard median income.⁶⁰ Metropolitan and provincial offices of education generally subsidize high school education costs, school meal expenses, after-school program vouchers, and educational IT support to students from households with incomes between 50-80% of the standard median income. Also, childcare and early childhood education subsidies are provided for infants aged 0–5, including children with disabilities and those from low-income households. Scholarships are also provided to high-achieving low-income students in elementary, middle, and high school until university graduation and to students at risk of dropping out due to emergencies such as disasters or violence. (Annex, Table 45)

Dependence on private education and response measures

113. The Government annually conducts a survey on private education expenses and publishes the result, examining variables⁶¹ that have a meaningful impact on monthly average costs. It provides basic data for developing and evaluating education policies, including measures to reduce private education costs and strengthen public education. (Annex, Table 46)

⁵⁸ The cases where the pregnant women or her spouse suffers from any eugenic or genetic disability or disease, or contagious disease, where she is impregnated by rape or quasi-rape, where pregnancy is taken place between relatives by blood or by marriage, where pregnancy is likely to injure the health of the pregnant woman severely.

⁵⁹ A national policy task of “Ensuring Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights” is under implementation.

⁶⁰ Provided as an individual voucher to each student, while textbook costs, admission fees, and tuition are paid directly to schools based on actual expenses.

⁶¹ Regional scale, academic achievement, school track, etc.

114. The Government recognizes the seriousness of private education for young children and addresses it as part of its national policy task. An amendment to the *Act on the Establishment and Operation of Private Teaching Institutes and Extracurricular Lessons* prohibiting entrance tests for young children (the “age 4 and age 7 exams”) was passed by the National Assembly and promulgated in March. Detailed provisions will be set out through amendments to the Presidential Decree and are to take effect in September 2026. Moreover, the Government is also working with metropolitan and provincial offices of education to promote public awareness of the value of play-based learning in early childhood.

Reply to paragraph 22

115. To support inclusive education for students with disabilities, the Government has established and implemented the Sixth Special Education Development 5 Year Plan (2023–2027),⁶² which includes “strengthening support for inclusive education for all” as a major task. It expands individualized special education tailored to each student’s disability types and characteristics, and is piloting co-teachers in inclusive classrooms (March 2026). From April 2026, it will conduct policy research to develop performance indicators for assessing the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of inclusive education, and will incorporate key policy tasks reflecting on-site needs into the Seventh Special Education Development 5 Year Plan (2028-2032). Through the MOE’s Special Education Operational Plan, the Government is working with metropolitan and provincial offices of education to ensure the implementation and preparation of individualized education plans in accordance with legal requirements and to monitor their implementation at all school levels.
116. To promote understanding of inclusive education among general education teachers and strengthen their capacity, the Government is expanding training on inclusive education for teachers in leading schools for inclusive education⁶³ and regular schools. It has also designated the expansion of special classes as a national policy task and is advancing its implementation. Since December 2023, more than 600 special classes have been newly established or expanded each year, resulting in a total of 1,371 additional special classes over two years.⁶⁴ (Annex, Tables 47-48)

Reply to paragraph 23

⁶² Pursuant to Article 5 of the *Act on Special Education for Persons with Disabilities*, the Government establishes the Plan and annually reviews the implementation status.

⁶³ Jeongdaun Schools, 284 schools in 2025

⁶⁴ 13,287 classes (2023) → 14,658 classes (2025).

Expansion of the eligibility criteria for long-term stayers and undocumented minors

117. To expand the scope of beneficiaries, the Government has extended the “Measures to grant status of stay to foreign children staying in Korea for a long term to guarantee their right to education” until March 2028, which was originally set to expire at the end of March 2025. Accordingly, the status of stay is now granted not only to children who meet the eligibility requirements but also to their minor siblings. (Annex, Table 49)

Equal access to education for migrant and undocumented children

118. In October 2023, the Government amended the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*⁶⁵ to strengthen the legal basis to guarantee equal access to education. Through information sharing between the MOE and the Ministry of Justice, multilingual text messages explaining school enrollment procedures are sent to immigrant and refugee parents who have children aged 6-17. Also, enrollment guide materials and video content produced in 15 languages⁶⁶ are distributed to relevant institutions⁶⁷ to help children enter the public education system. The Government has also developed and distributed “guidance materials for schools on managing school records for students of foreign nationality,” so that schools can process their admission.

Plans to revise the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*

119. To ensure the right to education of all students, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* was amended to provide a legal basis for temporarily separating students who disrupt class activities and offering them individualized education support, which is not to exclude them, but to support their return to class. An explanatory guide has been developed and distributed to ensure that such support is applied only to the minimum extent necessary for the student’s psychological and emotional stability. Pursuant to Article 15 of the *Teachers’ Guidance of Student Life*, individualized education plans must include provisions on behavioral intervention support for students with special education needs who exhibit serious behavioral

⁶⁵ Article 28-2 (1) The State and local governments shall prepare necessary policy measures in education for the guarantee, etc. of equal educational opportunities for children or students according to the following classifications (hereinafter referred to as “multicultural students, etc.”):

1. A child or student who is a member of a multicultural family defined in subparagraph 1 of Article 2 of the *Multicultural Families Support Act*;

2. A foreign child or student residing in ROK who is planning to enter or already enrolled in any school under the subparagraphs of Article 2.

⁶⁶ Korean, English, Chinese, Japanese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Russian, French, Mongolian, Khmer, Thai, Arabic, Burmese, Uzbek, and Indonesian.

⁶⁷ Online and offline through metropolitan and provincial offices of education, local multicultural education support centers, immigration offices, immigrant welfare centers, foreign worker support centers, embassies, family centers, and healthy family support centers.

difficulties. Also, the *Guidelines of Behavioral Interventions for Students with Disabilities* (October 2024) provide support procedures for situations requiring immediate action.

Cultural rights

Reply to paragraph 24

Persons with disabilities

120. The Government is carrying out various policies with the Korea Disability Arts and Culture Center, the agency responsible for promoting arts and culture for persons with disabilities. It opened “Modu Art Theater (October 2023)” and “Modu Art Space (December 2024)” as standard performance and exhibition venues, respectively, dedicated to artists with disabilities. The Government will continue efforts to expand accessible cultural infrastructure, including customized stage technology support and tailored services that consider different types of disabilities. (Annex, Table 50)

Migrants, refugees, and linguistic minorities

121. The Government provides bilingual education to children from multicultural families that supports learning the native language of their marriage migrant parents. Since 2024, the age range of eligible children has been expanded from 12 to 18 years old. In addition to bilingual parent education programs, the Government continues to expand support by establishing and operating “bilingual classrooms,” where children can directly learn their parents’ native language.⁶⁸ From 2026, the scope has been expanded to include not only children from multicultural families but also migrant-background and undocumented children and adolescents.
122. The Government guarantees cultural rights through the *Act on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity* and the *Framework Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Korea*. For more details, see paragraphs 109–114 of the fifth periodic report. (Annex, Tables 51-52)

Reply to paragraph 25

123. The KMCC is undertaking institutional improvements to enhance the transparency of algorithm-based recommendation services and ensure users’ right to choose, to address issues arising from such services, including restrictions on users’ access to information, confirmation

⁶⁸ 128,619 (2022) → 139,040 (2023) → 429,209 (2025).

bias, and social and structural forms of discrimination.⁶⁹ In addition, the *Information and Communications Network Act* has recently been amended to introduce procedures for measures against illegal information by large-scale service providers and a user objection procedure.⁷⁰ Accordingly, remedies will be available, such as procedures for users to challenge the platform's content removal or blocking measures and to apply for dispute mediation through the KOCSC.

124. According to statistics on attendance rates at cultural and arts events by age group, the in-person attendance in 2025 decreased year on year for all age groups except those aged 15–19. The largest decrease was among people in their 40s, at 7.1 pp. The gap in attendance rates between those aged 70 and above and those in their 20s narrowed from 68.3 to 66.7 pp. between 2024 and 2025. (Annex, Table 53)

⁶⁹ Four amendment bills to the *Information and Communications Network Act* reflecting these measures have been referred to the relevant committee of the National Assembly.

⁷⁰ Amended on 7 January 2026, effective from 7 July 2026