



ASEM Conference on Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons

Seoul, Korea, 26th to 28th October 2010

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

1. The ASEM Conference on Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons was held in Seoul, Korea on 26-28 October, 2010, jointly by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. The proposal for the conference was approved at the 10th ASEM Summit held in Italy last year. In the conference, 200 experts from 45 countries including representatives from ASEM members, National Human Rights Institutions (hereinafter referred to as "NHRIs"), academia, international institutions and NGOs participated, and discussions were made on the following essential elements needed in guaranteeing adequate living condition for older persons: right to health, prohibition of age discrimination, right to work and income security, right to self-determination, right to access to medical aid and care service, social exclusion and violence, and right to freedom from violence and abuse. In addition, detailed measures and direction of cooperation for promotion and protection of human rights of older persons were discussed.

2. Participants agreed that age discrimination, inequality, social exclusion, poverty and inadequate living conditions, unattended physical and mental chronic diseases, disabilities, violence and abuse, lack of provision of care service, loneliness and isolation of older persons which are caused by the rapid global population ageing attributable to low birth rate and extended life expectancy are universal issues that countries, despite their continuous efforts, are faced with and need to be urgently addressed.

3. In a bid to address such issues, change of perception on older persons, inclusion of the elderly into the regional network, promotion of active ageing, independent life, inclusion of the elderly into government's policy on development and protection of persons with disabilities, enhancement of productivity of the elderly population, measures to make better use of the elderly, flexible operation of mandatory retirement system and a need for a new convention on human rights of older persons were discussed.

4. The conference recognized that, as prescribed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone is born equal in dignity and entitled to the right to adequate living condition, and such values should not be undermined or degraded on the basis of one's age, and to this end, broad and comprehensive human rights based approach and discussion with older persons at the center have to be taken.

5. It was emphasized that, to this end, first, the government of each country needs to actively carry out activities to promote and protect human rights of older persons and regard the elderly as a right-holder instead of a mere subject in policy legislation.

6. Second, the conference confirmed that in order to make public discussion on human rights situation of older persons and related issues and to effectively deliver opinion of older persons, the role of private organizations and experts for older persons and support for them have to be strengthened.

7. Third, the conference recognized the need for enhancement of perception on older persons for promotion of their rights, and a need for PR activities including continuous campaign and education program to enhance perception on older persons, to this end.

8. Fourth, the conference reaffirmed importance and role of NHRIs in promotion and protection of human rights of older persons and a need of participation of NHRIs to the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Human Rights of Older Persons to allow effective contribution of NHRIs.

9. Fifth, the conference wishes the ASEM to be the forum for public discussion on human rights of older persons, because international cooperation and continued inter-state exchange to share information on legislations, institutions, policies and best practice and introduce exemplary cases, along with the efforts of individual countries, will have positive impacts on spreading diverse measures to promote and protect human rights of older persons, since population ageing and human rights of older persons are international issues.

10. Lastly, participants appreciated the National Human Rights Commission of Korea for providing a forum for discussion on human rights of older persons, supported the National Human Rights Commission of Korea to continue to contribute to cooperation among ASEM members for promotion of human rights of older persons, and confirmed their will to continue discussion at the international expert meeting on human rights of older persons that will be held in Korea, in the first half of next year.