

It is my honour to be able to speak at the UN forum on minority issues, speak to Madam Chairperson, and the participants who have engaged in the causes of minority rights over the world. My name is Hyun Ah YANG, I am representing National Commission of Human Rights of Korea. There are new and old minority rights issues in Korea after 1990s, migrant workers and mass immigration increased the relatively homogenous country like Korea. Although the foreigners consist around 2% of entire population in Korea, they increased rapidly and will increase more in the future. Moreover over 10% of entire marriages now has one ethnic minorities, mostly the women, from China, Vietnam, Philippines and Cambodia, etc.

Racial and gender discrimination in the process of formation and after the matrimony raises serious tasks and challenges for Korea. For the last decade national Commission of Human Rights of Korea put significant amounts of effort to lessen the prejudice against ethnic minorities, for instance the commission conducted research to investigate the human rights conditions of foreign workers, to see, to set the policy guidelines to protect immigrants rights, such as protection from the domestic violence, and other kinds of inhumane treatments. And to get a proper education for their children and to have social security, to name a few.

The old minority issues can be found in the issue of diaspora, that can be found in the various regions such as China, CIS nations and Japan for instance. As a former colony of Japanese state, there were Koreans who were forcibly displaced in those places, but never coming back, nor being compensated their damages or even properly recognised as minority as such after the colonisation. Most diaspora have been deprived of political freedom and some even did not have nationality as in the case of ethnic Koreans residing in Japan. These issues introduce some Asian context in thinking about minority rights issues, the war and colonialism and cold war after world war two constituted the uniqueness of minority problems in Asia but remain mostly underrepresented. I would like to raise some awareness about these issues.

Thank you for your attention and listening.