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General Debate

**Parliamentary Action for Social Development and Justice
– Decent and Productive Work**

*Delivered by Wi Seong-gon
Head of Delegation
National Assembly of the Republic of Korea*

Honorable delegates!

I am Wi Seong-gon, head of the Korean delegation.

Today, I would like to speak about the role of parliaments in building a just and sustainable society.

A healthy and resilient society is one in which every member has fair access to opportunities, rights, and resources. At the heart of this principle lies the protection of labor rights.

Work is not just a means of making a living—it is essential to human dignity. It also forms the foundation for shared and inclusive growth in our society.

That is why we must ensure fair wages and safe working conditions for all.

Recently, the Korean National Assembly amended the Labor Standards Act. Under the revised law, employers are now required to pay interest on unpaid wages to current employees. The amendment also introduces penalties for employers who habitually delay wage payments.

In addition, the Republic of Korea actively supports the social and solidarity economy, including cooperatives and social enterprises. These organizations play a vital role in promoting community values and driving sustainable development.

However, none of these legal frameworks or policies would be possible without the firm foundation of democracy.

Last December, the President of South Korea declared martial law. He violated the Constitution and the law, mobilizing law enforcement and pointing guns at citizens. Just last Friday, he was officially impeached by the will of the Korean people.

For 123 days, millions of citizens braved the harsh winter cold. They peacefully took to the streets, calling for his impeachment.

Our citizens chose patience over violence, and solidarity over division. They stood up to defend democracy.

In the end, the Constitutional Court upheld the impeachment passed by the National Assembly, formally removing the president from office. Citizens were able to return to their daily lives.

This was more than a political event in one country. It was a historic moment in which the sovereignty of the people prevailed and universal values triumphed.

Let us remember this: democracy is never guaranteed. It must be protected through the enduring sacrifice and courage of our citizens.

I urge all of you here today to remain vigilant, so that democracy is not threatened and citizens' voices are not silenced around the world.

If we come together in solidarity, we can build a more just and equitable world.

I hope this meaningful conference marks the first step toward that goal.

Thank you for your attention.