

## 151<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly

### General Debate:

### *Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis*

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*(Check against delivery)*

Honorable delegates, good morning. I'm Yoon Jae-ok, member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.

Today, I would like to share with you the Republic of Korea's experiences and proposals under the theme of "upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis."

Wars, the climate crisis, disasters, and the spread of infectious diseases are real threats that can occur anywhere in the world. In such times of crisis, there are clear principles that all humanity must uphold: to respect International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and humanitarian norms, and to guarantee humanitarian action.

First of all, we should take a multilateral approach to strengthen respect for and implementation of International Humanitarian Law. Parliaments have important responsibilities in this regard as the authorities that approve governments' plans for humanitarian assistance and international cooperation, as well as to establish the necessary legal framework for these efforts.

In this context, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea enacted the Act on Overseas Emergency Relief in 2007 to institutionalize the national humanitarian assistance system. Building on this foundation, the Korean government introduced the Revised Humanitarian Assistance Strategy and Comprehensive Implementation Plan for International Development Cooperation. These initiatives aim to deliver humanitarian assistance in crisis-affected regions, making tangible contributions to alleviating the suffering of local communities. They also ensure swift responses to emergencies caused by natural disasters or armed conflict, facilitating the rapid recovery of affected areas. Taken together, these efforts represent significant progress in placing core humanitarian principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence – on a firm legal footing.

Next, we are witnessing multilateralism being challenged by political divisions and economic pressures. However, it is precisely in times of crisis that humanitarian action must be guaranteed through national commitment and international solidarity. Even

amidst economic and diplomatic constraints, the Korean government has continued to provide emergency relief and humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected regions such as Ukraine, Sudan and the Gaza Strip.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) are actively implementing multilateral humanitarian projects, including refugee protection and food assistance, in close cooperation with international organizations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and World Food Programme (WFP). This reflects the country's strong commitment to placing human life and dignity above political interests.

Lastly, strengthening the humanitarian agenda requires an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach. Governments, parliaments, international organizations, civil society, and businesses must join forces. The Republic of Korea, through public-private partnership programs for humanitarian assistance, collaborates with domestic NGOs to carry out projects including emergency relief, early recovery, disaster risk reduction, support for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and responses to gender-based violence in conflict situations. This solidarity across all sectors of society is key to making tangible progress on the humanitarian agenda.

Honorable delegates,

Upholding humanitarian norms in times of crisis is not an option, but an obligation. It is our shared responsibility to take action to make this a reality. The Republic of Korea will continue to make meaningful contributions to enhancing respect for International Humanitarian Law and strengthening humanitarian action through legislative efforts, policy development, and cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.