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General Debate 3 (a): Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels

(b) Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Statement submitted by Korean Association for Supporting the SDGs for the UN (ASD), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council²

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

¹ [E/CN.9/2019/1](#).

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The world population is now experiencing a rapid growth. From 10 billion people in 1805, it took more than a hundred years to reach a world population of 20 billion. Yet, after reaching 70 billion in October 2011, the world population increased by 648 million people in just seven years, reaching 76.48 billion. The exponential growth of world population, with limited land, sea, and other natural resources, presents a difficult challenge for mankind. The population growth, in turn, is causing a proportional increase in fossil fuel usage and demand for logistics and transportation, and an excessive growth of large-scale industrial livestock breeding for supplying additional food, causing global warming to further accelerate. Global warming is melting glaciers, which in turn raises the sea level and reduces farmland. Such unpredictable climate change may cause a great trouble for food production. Such circumstances cause industrial and economic instability and greatly affect the global economy. The number of young people under the age of 20 in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central and South America is increasing fast, resulting in economic difficulties and political instabilities due to tight job market condition. On the other hand, North America, Europe, and Northeast Asia are experiencing increase of the elderly population, which presents health and social welfare challenges. Population growth in each region is causing a great problem – a shortage of food, water, jobs, and residential space. This problem, in turn, accelerates widening of the wealth gap between countries, generations, and sexes. In particular, the fourth industrial revolution is expected to replace humans with information and communication technology (ICT) in diverse areas such as manufacturing, service, sales, and finance, reducing jobs for basic mundane task and high value-added activities alike.

The United Nations and governments around the world are making plans and implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address these problems, but such actions are being side-lined by prior social and political issues of each country. The biggest problem in the implementation of the SDGs is that governments alone cannot effectively provide economic and technological platform for the implementation. It is time for increased participation from the business sector, which is capable of providing the said economic and technological platform. Especially, global corporations can participate and greatly reduce inequalities between groups by helping job creation, environmental improvement, provision and diffusion of special technology.

The Republic of Korea is one of the countries where government, businesses and civil society are working together to implement the SDGs. Korean Association for Supporting the SDGs for the United Nations, a special consultative body for the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is providing support to major global businesses in Republic of Korea so that they can achieve and proliferate sustainable management practices using their special technology and resources. In addition, it helps them network with important leaders of the SDGs worldwide, and provides Sustainable Development Goals Business Index (SDGBI), an indicator of sustainable management based on the SDGs, to let businesses actively implement the SDGs and adapt to the changing global environment.

KT is the representative company that has made the most progress in implementing the SDGs in Republic of Korea. KT, a global comprehensive telecommunication company, was chosen as the first sustainability partner for PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games that was held in Republic of Korea in January 2018. KT has built the world's first 5G trial network and pilot service, proving itself as the leader of 5G technology. KT's Sustainable cooperation between the management and labour union enables using its leading technology to create stable jobs and reduce social inequalities.

Unlike the previous generation networks, 5G is a network capable of connecting tens of thousands of devices by processing a very high volume of data with ultra-low latency. Three key properties – ultra-wide band, ultra-low latency, hyper-connectivity – provide the foundation for new technologies such as autonomous vehicles and virtual reality (VR). The 5G network is a new technological platform in addressing challenges faced by mankind, such as global warming, climate change, the spread of infectious diseases, and provision of universal education. Specifically, 5G reduces information gap between developing and developed countries and contributes to job growth by helping the existing industries expand to a new level.

KT is the world's most advanced global company in this 5G technology. KT is the first to present the vision for 5G, which was delivered by its CEO at the keynote address of Mobile World Congress (MWC) in March 2015. In 2016, KT completed the world's first full 5G specification and successfully made the first 5G call. KT has provided 5G pilot service for 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, successfully completed 5G frequency transmission in July that year, and plans to commercialize 5G service in 2019. Commercialization of 5G needs active discussions and cooperation from ICT providers and device manufacturers worldwide. The companies in this industry are now the most influential companies in the world. Therefore, the cooperation between them can greatly reduce technological and informational inequalities between continents, countries, and social groups. It means that they can make a great contribution to solving the world's problems.

KT's 5G technology can play an important role in providing smart energy and preventing disaster, safety, and contagion. KT-MEG, the world's first integrated energy management platform based on 5G, is used in new renewable energy and electronic vehicle (EV) charging and makes an important contribution in reducing carbon emission. Also, previously unforeseeable disasters can be predicted and prevented by building 5G integrated wireless network. Another major achievement of KT is its response to infectious diseases. Starting with the "Global Infectious Disease Prevention Project" at the UN Global Compact Leaders' Summit 2016, KT has been taking steps to prevent infectious diseases. KT proposed "Global Epidemic Prevention Platform" (GEPP) based on roaming data at the World Economic Forum 2018 and formed WEF working group with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Harvard University, and World Health Organization (WHO).

Also, the company is creating a new model for reducing greenhouse gas emission in response to global warming. Led by KT, 5G has a possibility to serve as a good model for telecommunication businesses around the world in reducing greenhouse gas emission. 90 per cent of greenhouse gas emission from telecommunication providers is from their network equipment, and investments in 5G equipment bring a big change to this environment.

Global population growth, and subsequent challenges to mankind and the global environment, are not something to be worried about the future. They are the most threatening challenges facing us today. Not only the United Nations and governments of each country but also businesses and civil societies should work towards solving these challenges. Especially, economic and technological support of companies is the most important requirement for success. It is a very meaningful fact that a global telecommunication company with world class technology like KT is working hard to fulfil and complement 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. This can be a special model for governments and global companies around the world. Also, the effort can make a significant contribution for reducing inequalities and fulfilling development agendas which are required by increased global population.