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The 12th Session of the Human Rights Council
Advisory Committee
Discussion on Local Government and Human Rights
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Statement by H.E.Mr. YOO Yeonchul
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Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

It is my great honor to have an opportunity to speak in front of the esteemed members of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on behalf of the core group of the HRC resolution on local government and human rights which was adopted in the 24th session of the Human Rights Council.

The Republic of Korea, with the core group of the resolution including Chile, Egypt, Romania and the Republic of Korea, would like to extend its sincere appreciation to the Committee for its continued interest in advancing the debate on the issue of “local government and human rights”.

Mr. Chairperson and distinguished members,

As you are well aware, the HRC resolution 24/2 on local government and human rights enjoyed the strong support of Member States as it benefited from 49 co-sponsors and was adopted by consensus. Given that this resolution was the first initiative in the field, we believe that such strong support reflects broad consensus and the collective aspiration shared by States regarding the enhanced engagement of local governments in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Before tabling the draft resolution to the Human Rights Council, the core group held two rounds of informal consultations with Member States to reflect their views on the text of the resolution. In this regard, we believe that it is very important and useful to convey to the Members of the Advisory Committee the two outstanding opinions expressed by States during the informal consultations.

First, even though the title of the resolution contains the wording of “local government”, some countries preferred using the terminology of “local authorities” or

“local administration” to that of “local government” since local government has different forms and functions in every State in accordance with its constitutional and legal system.

Second, we noticed unanimous recognition of the fact that the first responsibility to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms belongs primarily to the national Government of States. However, there was also a question raised by a Member State about whether the roles of local government should be considered as supplementary compared to the responsibilities of the national government.

Based upon those opinions, we would like to draw particular attention to two important aspects of the research to be conducted by the drafting group;

- First, it seems extremely important to establish a clear definition for local government which could reflect its various forms and functions depending on States. If necessary, it could be possible to introduce new terminology.
- Second, we believe that the future debate on the roles of local government should remain both non-political and practical. Thus, it will be very important to focus the research on the practical roles which could be played by local government without any prejudice to the primary responsibility of the national government.

Mr. Chairperson and distinguished members,

The scope of the activities of local government is already broad and continues to expand in many countries. Indeed, the room for local government to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights has also broadened. In this regard, we believe that your study will offer a very important foundation for future debate on the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Bearing in mind that the resolution requests the Advisory Committee to present its progress report to the Human Rights Council in its 27th session due in September this year, we sincerely hope that the drafting group will promptly engage itself in the study and that a high level of cooperation between the core group and the drafting group will remain.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. /End/