

Statement by the Delegation of the
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
on item 17

delivered on
16 Feb. 1994

Mr. Chairman,

The forty-fifth session of the Sub-Commission held soon after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights discussed practical issues for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and made relevant decisions.

My delegation would like to appreciate the Sub-Commission for its deep concerns to the protection of women and the issues of impunity and reparation for victims which are imperative in preventing the recurrence of gross violations of human rights.

The Sub-Commission considered the final report E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/8 concerning the right to restitution, compensation and rehabilitation for victims of gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms submitted by Mr. Theo van Boven and adopted the decision 1993/29 in which it has invited the Commission to pay a particular attention to the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report.

The Sub-Commission also adopted the decision 1993/24 in which it decided to entrust Mrs. Linda Chavez, as Special Rapporteur, with the task of undertaking an in-depth study on the situation of systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during wartime, and my delegation is of the view that this decision will be conducive to dealing properly with the gross violations of human rights which have so far eluded the scrutiny of the international community.

Historically, the issue of protection of women dates back to centuries. However, we at the threshold of next millennium still witness the phenomena of mental, physical, individual or collective impairment of the honour and dignity of women, infringement of their rights as a human being and even ruthless killings in several parts of the world.

One of the main factors for the continued occurrence of gross human rights violations similar to the past is ascribable to the impunity and the lack of full investigation and disclosure of the past crimes and reparations. No statutory limitations shall apply to the crimes against humanity.

Mr. Theo van Boven stated clearly in his report that "It should be kept in mind that successor Governments remain to be bound by the responsibility incurred by predecessor

Governments for wrongful acts committed by them and not repaired by them as a matter of state responsibility".

The revival of the past crimes, taking new forms covertly or overtly, shows that only when the past crimes are liquidated legally and morally in time, will it be possible to consolidate the status of international law, maintain justice and morality and bring about a peaceful future of the world.

As Mrs. Linda Chaves mentioned in her preparatory document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/44, "We are only now coming to understand better the long-term emotional and physical consequences for victims. Recent publicity concerning the continued deleterious effects suffered by Chinese, Dutch, Filipino, Indonesian and Korean women forced into sexual slavery during the Second World War confirms that systematic rape can have a devastating impact on its victims, which lasts years beyond the immediate horror of the act itself."

Mr. Chairman,

The inhumane crime committed by Japan in the past is an international issue which covers millions of Asian and European victims and their families in all regions trampled underfoot by the "Imperial Army". It is for this reason that its consequences and impacts are so devastating.

My delegation has already on several occasions made it clear that Japan should make a thorough investigation of the truth of the "comfort women for the army" and forcibly displaced persons, bring those responsible to criminal justice and make sincere reparations.

The victims of sexual slavery and forcible displacement are passing away one by one with their mental and physical wounds unhealed.

If the world community is unable to restore the impaired honour and dignity of the small number of the survivors, how can we promote and protect the human rights of hundreds millions of women of the world and maintain the international justice and morality.

My delegation views that an in-depth study on the situation of systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices and of impunity is an important issue related not only to the honour and dignity of the victimised women but also to all women of the world and a responsible work to ensure a peaceful future of the world, and it therefore hopes that this Commission would encourage the initiatives undertaken by the Sub-Commission.

Thank you.