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Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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I. Main contents and preparation process of the report

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the General Guidelines for the Preparation of Information under the UPR as set out in Human Rights Council Decision (A/HRC/DEC/17/119). It contains key legislative, administrative and practical measures adopted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and achievements in its efforts for their implementation since the second review in May 2014 and future goals.
2. A taskforce was formed for the preparation of this report under the coordination of the National Committee for the Implementation of International Human Rights Instruments, comprising officials of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, Central Court, Central Public Prosecutors Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education Commission, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Labour and Central Bureau of Statistics, as well as representatives of social organizations such as Socialist Women' Union, Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, Federation for the Protection of the Elderly and Association for the Support of the Child, and experts from academic institutions like the Institute of Human Rights and Law Institute of the Academy of Social Sciences.
3. A workshop was organized for the taskforce to have a clear understanding of the methodology of preparing the report, which collected information in the sectors concerned, giving priority to obtaining information on the implementation of the recommendations accepted at the DPRK's second review. Several rounds of consultations were held before the compilation of the draft report.
4. The draft report was then sent to the State institutions and social organizations concerned for consultation, and their comments and inputs were considered and reflected in the final revision of the report.

II. Legislative and institutional measures taken for the protection and promotion of human rights

A. Legislative measures

1. Human rights legislation

5. During the reporting period the DPRK, with a view to improving and perfecting the legal framework for the protection and promotion of human rights, put a lot efforts into enacting or amending human rights-related laws.
6. The Law on Teachers (October 8, 2015), Law on Implementation of Curricula (June 24, 2016), Law on Dissemination of Science and Technology (October 12, 2017) and Law on Vocational Education (July 12, 2018) were enacted, and Law on Education and Law on Higher Education amended, thereby securing legal guarantee for people to enjoy their rights to education on a higher level.
7. The Law on Disaster Prevention, Relief and Recovery (June 27, 2014), Law on Welfare Service (December 24, 2014), Law on Savings (November 23, 2016) and Law on the Control of Mineral Water (October 12, 2017) were enacted, and the Law on Environmental Protection, Law on Dwellings, Law on the Management of Parks and Recreation Grounds, Law on the Prevention of Epidemics and Law on Foodstuff Hygiene were amended, establishing a more concrete legal system for people to enjoy highly civilized life.
8. The Socialist Labour Law was amended on June 30, 2015 for the purpose of extending the period of maternity leave from 180 days to 240 days, and the Law on Labour Protection and Law on Work Norms were amended, thus improving the legal system for providing safer, more cultured and hygienic working condition to people and protecting and promoting their life and health.

9. The Criminal Law was amended on July 22, 2015 to establish more severe punishment for abuse of power, negligence of duties and other violations of law committed by law enforcement officers during the performance of their duties.

10. The Regulations on the Qualification of Prosecutors and Judges at Public Prosecutors Offices and Courts at All Levels were adopted on March 21, 2018 with the aim of establishing a strict system and order in the assessment and review of the qualifications of prosecutors and judges and improving the overall qualitative composition of their ranks, and putting in place a legal system for conducting judicial work in a just and fair manner and in strict accordance with the law. The Regulations on the Election of Judges and People's Assessors of Courts at All Levels were amended on August 10, 2016 to ensure that democratic principle is firmly maintained in the election of judges and people's assessors and the judicial policy of the State is effectively implemented.

11. Regulations and rules were also adopted or amended to provide for detailed technical matters for the implementation of the related laws, which include, for instance, Regulations on Labour Discipline, Regulations on the Operation of Cereals Stores, Regulations on the Responsible Management of Socialist Enterprises, Regulations on the Responsible Management of Farms, Regulations on Medical Assessment of Ability to Work, Regulations on People's Hospitals, Regulations on Specialist Centers of Infectious Diseases, Regulations on State Support to Triplets, Regulations on Support for Educational Institutions, Regulations on Primary and Secondary Boarding Schools for Children without Parental Care, Regulations on Primary Schools and Junior and Senior Secondary Schools, Regulation on Schools for the Blind and Deaf, Regulations on Factory, Farm and Fishermen's Colleges, Regulations on IT Service, etc.

2. Accession to international treaties

12. The DPRK ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in November 2014. It signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2013 and in December 2016 respectively, and acceded in February 2016 to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled. It acceded to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in June 2016.

B. Institutional measures

13. The National Committee for the Implementation of the International Human Rights Treaties (National Committee) was formed in April 2015, which is a merger of such treaty-specific coordinating committees as the national coordinating committee for the implementation of CRC and the national coordinating committee for the implementation of CEDAW. The National Committee, composed of representatives of State institutions and social organizations, meets regularly to discuss measures for the implementation of the Conventions to which the DPRK is a State party, disseminates Conventions, prepares treaty-specific reports and UPR reports, and distributes concluding observations and recommendations adopted by treaty bodies and UPR working groups. It also finds out about the status of implementation by the stakeholders of the Conventions and relevant domestic laws and submits opinions and recommendations to the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, the Cabinet and other competent institutions.

14. The National Committee for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities was organized in December 2016, whose mission includes providing unified coordination of the efforts for the implementation of laws and policies of the State on the protection of persons with disabilities. Chaired by the vice Premier, this committee is composed of officials and experts of 20-odd disability-related State institutions and heads of organizations of persons with disabilities such as the Deaf Association and the Blind Association. There is established in all provinces, cities and counties the Committee for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, which is led by the chairperson of the People's Committee of the locality concerned. There are also disability focal points in all disability-related ministries and

national institutions, which are charged with coordinating efforts for the protection of persons with disabilities in the particular sector.

15. The Institute of Human Rights was organized in November 2016 under the Academy of Social Sciences, with the aim of undertaking research on theoretical and practical issues arising in further consolidating and improving the socialist system for human rights protection, writing explanatory pamphlets, books, theses and press articles on international human rights treaties and relevant domestic laws that are conducive to enhancing public awareness of human rights and promoting exchanges with foreign countries in the field of human rights.

16. Departments exclusively responsible for baby homes, children's homes and boarding schools were created in April 2015 in the Cabinet, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of General Education and provincial People's Committees, so that medical care, supply of medicine and medical appliances, intellectual development and education of children without parents may be conducted in an integrated manner. Goods supply stores were set up in 2015 at all provinces for the supply of foodstuff, daily necessities, school materials, etc. to children without parental care, while a fishing station was newly organized in 2014 for the supply of fish exclusively to baby homes, children's homes, boarding schools and old homes.

C. Human rights education

17. The DPRK directs special attention to increasing awareness of human rights among officials of the people's power organs and law enforcement organs as they have a crucial role to play in the protection and promotion of human rights. During the reporting period, the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly and the National Committee jointly organized for them lectures, workshops and seminars on Conventions and relevant domestic laws. In particular, on the occasion of the preparation of national reports on the implementation of CRC and CEDAW in 2015 and CRPD in 2018 seminars and workshops were organized for them to share views and experiences in the implementation of the relevant conventions and domestic laws.

18. More classes were allotted to the law course at schools at all levels, while domestic laws and international human rights treaties were also taught in other courses in combination with the contents of the particular subject in an age- and psychology-appropriate manner. Law universities and colleges introduced a standalone course on international human rights treaties, which had formerly been a part of the international law course, to provide extensive and in-depth knowledge about international human rights laws, so that would-be law officers may be well aware of international human rights norms.

19. The Institute of Human Rights under the Academy of Social Sciences played a major role in increasing public awareness of human rights. Pamphlets, publications, press articles and theses on human rights compiled/written by this institute and interviews given by its renowned human rights experts on TV and other media made a great contribution to raising public awareness of human rights and international human rights instruments.

III. Achievements in protecting and promoting human rights

A. Civil and political rights

1. The right to life

20. The right to life is guaranteed by the Socialist Constitution, the Criminal Law and other laws concerned and protected by the prosecutorial, judicial and public security organs. The Criminal Law contains several provisions concerning crimes of violation of the right to life and punishments corresponding to the gravity of the crime concerned.

21. Death penalty applies only to extremely serious crimes. For instance, even if a person committed a heinous murder intentionally, he is to be subjected to death penalty only in

extremely serious cases. Death penalty is not imposed on those who were under 18 years of age when they committed crimes, nor executed against pregnant women.

22. In accordance with article 51 of the Criminal Procedure Law criminal cases to which death penalty is applicable fall under the jurisdiction of provincial or above-provincial level courts, while article 418 of the same law requires that death penalty should be executed subject to the final approval of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly.

23. General amnesties were granted to the convicts in 2015 and 2018 respectively in accordance with the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, and people's power organs concerned took necessary measures for them to lead a stable life without any inconveniences.

2. Independence of the court

24. The Socialist Constitution provides in article 166 that the Court shall be independent in administering justice, and judicial proceedings shall be carried out in strict accordance with the law.

25. Courts of the DPRK at all levels regard it as an iron rule to deal with cases pursuant to the requirements, procedures and methods as provided in the procedure laws concerned and the Law on the Composition of Courts, and without being subservient to the directives or demands of any institution. The constituted court alone is responsible before the law for the investigation and settlement of a given case. All courts adhere to the principle of settling cases only when the facts and circumstances are clarified and proved at a trial beyond reasonable doubt on the basis of objective and scientific evidence.

26. Whether a trial proceeds as required by the law is observed by the public prosecutor in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Law. When he learns of any violations of the law, the prosecutor lays a complaint before the court for rectification.

3. The right to fair trial

27. The DPRK consistently maintains the principle of ensuring scientific accuracy, objectivity and impartiality, as well as protecting human rights in dealing with criminal cases.

28. In accordance with the Criminal Procedure Law all trials are open to the public. Where there is a danger that a national secret or personal secret would be revealed or there is a fear of exercising a negative effect on society, a trial is closed to the public totally or partially. Even when the court hearing is not open to the public, the sentence is made public.

29. The rights of a person under preliminary examination or an accused person to consult with a defence counsel of his choice, to lodge a complaint with a public prosecutor about alleged violations of his rights, to appeal against the verdict of the court of first instance, etc. are fully guaranteed in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Law. The rights of a defence counsel to meet and talk with the examinee or the accused, to access the record of a case, to lay a complaint with the public prosecutor, judge or court when he learns of any violations of the right of the examinee or the accused, make pleadings in a trial in such a way that the accused is not subjected to undue punishment, to appeal to a higher court when he deems that the verdict delivered is too heavy for the crime committed, etc. are sufficiently ensured. When it is deemed that there is a conflict between a judgement which has been passed and the requirements of the law, the accused or the defence counsel is entitled to apply for an extraordinary appeal. In accordance with the Criminal Procedure Law, amended on December 21, 2017, even when the examinee waived his right to choose a defence counsel himself at the stage of preliminary examination, a defence counsel is appointed for him by the bar association concerned, so that his legal rights and interests may be protected.

4. The right to freedom of expression and information

30. The rights of citizens to freedom of expression and access to information are protected by the Socialist Constitution, the Law on Complaints and Petitions, Copyright Law, Law on the Protection of Computer Software, Law on Electronic Certification, Law on Telecommunication and other related laws.

31. During the reporting period a number of citizens lodged with the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, the Cabinet and other power organs and law enforcement organs complaints against public officials for their abuse of power, bureaucratism and other undesirable method and style of work, complaints and petitions concerning their livelihood and grievances about the legal punishments they had been subjected to. The institutions concerned took the complaints and petitions seriously as the voice and mind of the people, and dealt with them impartially in accordance with the principle and procedure as provided in the Law on Complaints and Petitions.

32. There was a surge in the writing by citizens, resulting in a marked increase in the variety and number of publications and contributing to enhancing the cultural level of the people. Publishing agencies commissioned institutions, enterprises and organizations, as well as individuals to write books, and released a great variety of publications. Exhibitions, shows, presentations, seminars and contests in various fields were organized scores of times every year for citizens to give full play to their creative talents. Successful participants in the events were widely covered by media and given State commendations and other incentives, working up public enthusiasm for creative activities.

33. The State continued to increase investment in basic information facilities with a view to further improving IT and telecommunication services and creating better conditions and environment for people to access, obtain and impart information by means of IT devices. Information service by the Intranet further improved and its coverage expanded, with the result that as of 2018 almost all institutions, enterprises and organizations were covered by the Intranet to receive services at their convenience. The number of individuals accessing Intranet increased significantly, who receive sufficient information through cellular phones, computers and other IT devices without any limit of time and place. In particular, a nationwide dissemination network of science and technology was established centering on the Sci-Tech Complex, inaugurated in 2016, enabling institutions, enterprises, factories and farms to access latest science and technology and other information needed for their management. Tens of thousands of digital libraries, IT service centres and mobile libraries set up across the country further improved their services, making it possible for not only adults but also children to seek, receive and share information of all kinds.

B. Economic, social and cultural rights

34. During the reporting period the DPRK oriented the country's economic development towards creating an affluent and cultured life of the people and solved all problems arising in economic construction to satisfy the demands and in the interests of people. Currently, the DPRK is channeling all its efforts into successful implementation of the 5-Year Strategy for National Economic Development (2016–2020). Implementation of the targets set out in this strategy will bring further progress in the enjoyment by people of their economic, social and cultural rights and their livelihood in particular. In the past three years tangible achievements were made in the sectors directly affecting people's living like foodstuff, footwear, textile and other sectors of light industry, public transport, etc.

1. The right to health

35. During the reporting period the DPRK set it as the main target of the health sector to further improve the public health service to increase the average life expectancy of the population, reduce the infant mortality rate, increase the rate of assisted delivery by skilled health workers and bring other key health indices into line with those of the world's most advanced countries and provide people with more hygienic living conditions and healthier environment. Strenuous efforts were made for the attainment of these targets such as developing health sector strategy for the implementation of the 5-Year Strategy for the National Economic Development, increasing State investment in this sector and taking necessary institutional and practical measures. The expenditure on public health during the reporting period accounted for 6.6% of GDP on average.

36. Mid-Term Strategy for the Development of the Health Sector of the DPRK (2016–2020), Malaria Control Strategy (2014–2017), Tuberculosis Control Strategy (2014–2017), Multi-Year Plan for Integrated Immunization (2016–2020) and other branch-related strategic plans were successfully implemented or are under implementation. For the effective

coordination of the implementation of these strategies the Department of Strategy was created in the Ministry of Public Health.

37. Modern medical institutions like Ryugyong General Ophthalmic Hospital, Ryugyong Dental Hospital and Health Oxygen Factory were built, a great number of hospitals and medical appliance factories upgraded and measures were adopted for the capacity-building of medical workers including the improvement of education of medical universities and refresher courses for serving doctors, all of which contributing to improving the quality of preventive and medical treatment. With a view to placing the hygienic and anti-epidemic work on IT basis, the real-time surveillance and notification system through the Intranet was developed and introduced across the country in 2015, and proactive efforts were made to introduce latest developments in medical science and technology and methods of treatment into medical service.

38. The nationwide telemedicine system, set up in 2009, connecting online the central hospitals with those in provinces, cities (or districts) and counties, were efficiently operated, enabling people to better enjoy the benefits of the free medical care system. As of 2018, the telemedicine system covered 6 central hospitals, 36 provincial hospitals and 190 cities (or district) and county hospitals. Over the past five years thousands of people across the country received treatment through this system, and the referral rate to higher hospitals reduced by 50%.

39. Considerable efforts were made to bring the manufacturing process of pharmaceutical and medical appliance factories into line with the GMP standards, with the result that quality of medicine improved and their variety and quantity increased. The information system of cold chain management, developed in 2018, is of great significance in securing vaccines in a planned manner and using them in a rational way. This system has made it possible to collect real-time data on the retaining of cold chain facilities by the central down to the grassroots units and the number of population, pregnant women and under-1 children, as well as the total amount of vaccines stored, warehousing, delivery and remaining stock, and take immediate measures to address issues that may arise.

40. Mineral water factories were built in areas where sources of quality mineral water were identified and stores set up in many parts of the country to provide people with quality drinking water. The quality of tap water was improved as a result of the introduction of purification and disinfection technology by use of nano technology.

41. Average life expectancy of the population increased from 70.3 in 2014 to 73.3 in 2017, while mortality rate per 1 000 population dropped from 8.5 in 2014 to 8.3 in 2017.

2. The right to education

42. DPRK, regarding education as the most important undertaking on which the future of the country hinges and the improvement of its quality, environment and conditions as the first and foremost national issue, increased investment in education and took a number of initiatives for its development. During the reporting period the expenditure on this sector accounted for 8.6% of GDP on average.

43. Mid-Term review of the implementation of the Decree on Introduction of the Universal 12-Year Compulsory Education was conducted at the 2nd Session of the 13th Supreme People's Assembly in September 2014. Implementation of the Decree was again reviewed at the 5th Session of the 13th Supreme People's Assembly in September 2017, at which the decision was adopted on further perfecting the general secondary education system and fundamentally improving the contents, forms and methods of education.

44. The National Strategy for the Development of Education (2015–2032) was developed and issued by the Education Commission in 2014, and stage-by-stage goals were set for its implementation. The 5-Year Strategy for the Development of Education (2016–2020) and the Action Plan for the Improvement of the Quality of Primary and Secondary Education (2017–2020) are under implementation. With 2017 and 2018 set as the Years of Science and Education, positive efforts were made to bring about a fresh turn in the educational sector as a whole and to upgrade the conditions and environment of education at all secondary-level schools in particular.

45. Innovative measures were put in place to improve the quality of education: In 2016 the timeframe of over 60 vocational colleges was extended by one year and their curricula and contents of education revised, thus raising the the quality of vocational education to a higher level; In 2017 about 100 secondary technical schools in 9 fields were newly established to provide education in a manner suited to the economic and geographical features of the particular region and individual characters of students; In 2018 secondary technical schools specializing in IT were set up in all provinces; The curricula of the universities of education and teacher-training colleges were revised with the aim of improving the quality of teacher training; Positive efforts were made to raise the level of IT application to education, with the result that as of 2018 all universities and colleges, as well as a large number of schools built up Intranet, which are connected online to the national computer network, making it possible for students and teachers to access the materials necessary for their study, teaching and scientific research; In 2017–2018 several scores of schools were turned into model schools equipped with multifunctional classrooms, quality educational apparatuses and fixtures, laboratories, outdoor study sites, traffic gardens and adequate amenities, and all other schools are following suit.

46. The State directed special attention to removing distinctions between town and countryside in the level of secondary education. In 2016 1~2 rural schools in each city and county were transformed into model schools with fine educational conditions and environment, and efforts are being made in accordance with an annual plan to generalize their examples to other rural schools. A detailed analysis of the realities of education at rural schools was made, and competent teachers from provincial, city and county seats and trainers of refresher course centers for serving teachers at provincial, city and county level were tasked with assisting rural teachers to improve their teaching abilities.

47. With a view to preparing all the members of society as intelligent workers with the intellectual level of a university graduate, a target of making them well-versed in science and technology was set and positive efforts were made for its attainment. Measures were adopted to expand the coverage of the national network for dissemination of science and technology centering on the Sci-Tech Complex and improve the operation of regional and sectoral sci-tech learning spaces. As a result, as of 2018 all factories and enterprises and almost all farms set up their sci-tech learning spaces, enabling working people to learn latest science and technology. Many counties, to say nothing of provinces and cities, established digital libraries, where working people access not only e-books and multimedia at their libraries but also e-materials posted on the websites of the Sci-Tech Complex and the Grand People's Study House and attend distance lectures. Education through TV and other mass media was provided in a more diverse and in-depth fashion, providing people with good conditions for life-long learning.

48. The distance education system was further improved, producing its first batch of graduates in 2015. 22 unversities across the country set up distance education colleges or faculties, where thousands of working people learn to their hearts' content the latest science and technology in the fields of their interest. Starting from 2017 distance education via the national mobile communication system became available, enabling people to learn at any time and at any place.

3. The right to food

49. With the amending of the Law on Farms in 2014 and 2015 and the adoption of the Regulations on Responsible Management of Farms in 2015, a new method of agricultural management was introduced, empowering farms to undertake management on their own initiative and in a creative manner and stimulating farmers to enhance their responsibility and role in the production and management. Major efforts were directed to doing farming on a scientific and technological basis, introducing advanced farming methods, breeding high-yielding strains that are suitable to the climatic and soil conditions of the country and increasing the proportion of farm work done by machines. As a result, cereals production steadily increased year by year, making big strides in solving food problem.

50. In accordance with the Regulations on the Operation of Cereals Stores adopted in 2015, cereals stores were set up in designated places for the purchase and sale of surplus food

from/to people, which contributed to stabilizing the price of cereals and implementing food administration policy of the State.

51. Various steps were also taken to increase production in the sectors of fishing and animal husbandry, which are of equal importance in addressing food problem. As a result, material-technical foundations of the fishing industry were strengthened, fisheries output increased and seafood processing bases upgraded, thus improving people's diet. A large-size stockbreeding base which went into operation in 2017, and has 50 000 hectares of pasture and processing units of livestock products is making a great contribution to bettering people's diet.

4. The right to housing

52. The DPRK continued to pursue the policy of building dwellings at its expense and providing them free of charge to people, thus offering them sufficient conditions for leading stable and cultured life. For instance, Mirae Scientists' Street, Ryomyong Street and Wisong Scientists' Dwelling Area housing thousands of flats and hundreds of public service establishments were built in 2015–2017, where scientists, teachers and other common people are living a civilized life in flats provided to them free of charge.

53. Tens of thousands of dwellings were also built or renovated in provinces, cities and counties, as well as in villages. For instance, the South Hamgyong Province built hundreds of flats for scientists, North Hwanghae Province built or renovated thousands of houses for farmers and the municipality of Nampho built a model farm village.

54. The State ensured that priority is given, when constructing power stations, to building new houses for people who have to be relocated to a different area for the sake of the project, and to building new hostels and houses for workers when new factories are built. For instance, when building the Paekdusan Hero Youth Hydropower Station, hundreds of dwellings equipped with quality furniture and daily necessities were built, before anything else, for the people whose houses were in the to-be-submerged area.

55. During the reporting period the State took emergency measures for the construction of dwellings for people in the areas affected by such disaster as floods and heavy rain, and concentrated all efforts on the relief of the disaster victims so that they could soon resume normal life. For instance, 1 800 houses were newly built within 40 days in Rason when it was hit by floods in 2015, and 11 900 houses were newly built and 15 000 renovated within 60 days in the North Hamgyong Province that suffered unprecedented floods in September 2016.

5. The right to cultural life

56. A series of measures were put in place to satisfy the increasing demands of people for better cultural rest: scenic spots were spruced up; recreation areas such as parks and pleasure grounds, as well as theatres were newly built or remodelled. For instance the Nature Museum and Central Zoo were built in 2016 as the excellent bases for cultural and leisure activities, and for education, while recreation grounds, water parks and funfairs equipped with modern facilities were set up in provinces, cities and counties, providing people with good conditions for enjoying diverse cultural and leisure activities.

57. In 2018 alone scores of indoor stadiums, sports grounds and other sports facilities were set up or renovated, and sports parks in many parts of the country were equipped with sporting apparatus fit for use by children and elderly people. Inter-provincial sports tournament which is open not only to workers, farmers, officers and youth but to kindergarten children and housewives, and other event-specific competitions were organized several times a year, enhancing, as never before, public interest in and enthusiasm for sports. The successful performance of the sportspersons of the DPRK at international sports games and championships during the reporting period was a fruitful result born of its policy on making sports an everyday activity.

58. In-house health homes were newly set up or existing ones refurbished in a number of factories and enterprises, to provide 15 or 30-day accommodation to workers, while the State provided at its expense 15, 20 or 30-day accommodation at holiday homes to workers doing tiresome labour.

59. Construction projects of Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Area and Yangdok Hot Spring Tourist Resort are in full swing, which will be completed by this year and serve to providing people with better conditions for leading a cultured life.

C. Rights of special groups

1. Child rights

60. During the reporting period the DPRK undertook and successfully implemented a series of measures for the promotion of well-being of children. According to the Strategy for Expansion of Integrated Management of Child Illness (2005–2020), integrated management of child illness was fully introduced to 11 provinces (or municipalities directly under central authority) and 118 counties. Telemedicine system connecting online the Okryu Children's Hospital in the capital city of Pyongyang with the provincial pediatric hospitals and the pediatric departments of county hospitals were efficiently operated, and practical measures were taken to strengthen the capacity of pediatricians, with the result that children were provided with timely and quality medical service.

61. In 2015 Pyongyang Children's Foodstuff Factory was extensively modernized and many other children's foodstuff bases modelled on it, resulting in the increased variety and improved quality of children's foodstuff. Legislative measures were taken to ensure that nutritional care of children is provided in a scientific way and in compliance with the hygienic standard, and nurseries and kindergartens exemplary in child nutritional care were widely introduced to the public through TV and other media, encouraging others to follow suit.

62. As a result, mortality rate of children under 1 and 5 (per 1 000 live births) decreased from 14.2 and 20.2 respectively in 2014 to 12.3 and 17.2 respectively in 2017, and the chronic and acute malnutrition rate dropped from 27.9% and 4.0% respectively in 2012 to 19.1% and 2.5% respectively in 2017.

63. During the reporting period, a notebook factory with the production capacity of 150 million a year was built and school-bag factories set up in all provinces. All students from primary schools to universities were provided with quality notebooks, school-bags and school uniforms at a nominal price.

64. Cultural and recreational bases were built in different parts of the country so that children could relax and enjoy their leisure time doing diverse cultural and physical activities. For instance, Children's Dream Hall was set up in the Sci-Tech Complex, a multifunctional hub of scientific and technological dissemination opened in January 2016 in order to create the environment for children to develop their creative thinking and prepare themselves into talents possessed of high creative ability. Schoolchildren's palaces, halls, camps and other extracurricular centers, children's parks and sports parks were built or renovated in all provinces, cities and counties for after-school activities of children.

65. One of the remarkable achievements made by the DPRK during the reporting period in its efforts to protect and promote children's rights is that various initiatives were undertaken for the upbringing and education of children without parents and those in remote areas and disaster areas, and public concern for them increased as never before. In the period between June 2014 and April 2017 40-odd baby homes, children's homes, primary and secondary boarding schools were newly built. Equipped with fine environment and conditions, these baby homes, children's homes, primary and secondary boarding schools are the national models in educational and hygienic terms. Here the children are living and studying happily under the special care of the State and society. After graduation from the secondary schools, they either proceed to universities or colleges or get jobs according to their wishes. More and more of these children are now studying at universities or colleges of their choice. When the northern part of the country was affected by unprecedentedly severe flood in September 2016, the State channelled all its resources into its recovery, with top priority given to the construction of nurseries, kindergartens, schools and hospitals, and while the recovery efforts were under way, over 1 600 children in the disaster-stricken area were sent to the Songdowon International Children's Camp, the best of its kind in the country, to enjoy camping life.

2. Women's rights

66. Public awareness of the important role played by women in promoting social progress and family welfare was further raised, and all institutions, enterprises, organizations, families and individual citizens took it as their legal obligation to ensure women the rights as provided in the Law on the Protection and Promotion of Women's Rights.

67. Measures were undertaken to appoint able women to the leading posts and give wide publicity to their achievements. As a result, in 2018 alone the proportion of women leaders at or above the departments of ministries and ministry-level institutions significantly increased. Women headed up the majority of the institutions of education, public health and light industry that were newly established during the reporting period. The proportion of women deputies to the 13th Supreme People's Assembly in 2014 and to the local power organs in 2015 accounted for 20.2% and 27% respectively. As of 2018 23.3% of women on average are served on the people's committees at all levels.

68. The number of women doing distance learning course at the leading universities of the country is on the increase. For example, more than 10 000 students are now studying at the Distance Education College of Kim Chaek University of Technology, the highest seat of scientific and technological education in the country, of whom women make up 60%, with many of them in their 40s and 50s.

69. Efforts were also made to provide good working conditions to women and to set up at factories and enterprises fine welfare facilities for them, so that they could do their work without any inconvenience. For example, hostels for women workers furnished with excellent living conditions were newly built at Kim Jong Suk Pyongyang Textile Mill and Kim Jong Suk Pyongyang Silk Mill in 2014 and 2017 respectively, while nurseries and kindergartens affiliated to factories and enterprises were refurbished in a modern fashion.

70. Strategy and Action Plan to Control Child and Maternal Malnutrition (2014–2018), Education Strategy for Reproductive Health (2014–2018) and the Action Programme for Health of Newborns (2015–2016) were implemented with success. As a result, maternal mortality (per 100 000 live births) decreased from 62.7 in 2014 to 53.2 in 2017.

71. The period of maternity leave was extended to 240 days and all provincial maternity hospitals were modernized, thus improving conditions for good health and recovery of delivered women and nutritional care of the child. Breast tumour departments newly created in all provincial maternity hospitals conducted, in close cooperation with the Breast Tumour Institute of Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, conducted research for prevention, early identification and effective intervention of breast tumour and related diseases. They also carried out regular checkup among women for early identification of such diseases. In 2015 family counselling sections were created at provincial, city and county hospitals so as to provide reproductive health-related counseling services in a comfortable environment.

3. The rights of persons with disabilities

72. The DPRK Strategy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (2018–2020) is under implementation, and strategies in such sectors as education, labour, public health and construction for the implementation of the 5-Year Strategy for National Economic Development (2016–2020) are also inclusive of stage-by-stage goals for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition to these, short- and long-term action plans developed by the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (KFPD) were successfully implemented under the coordination of the National Committee for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities and in close cooperation with the State institutions concerned.

73. Capacities of organizations affiliated to KFPD such as the Deaf Association, the Blind Association, Association of Women with Disabilities, Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities, Art Association of Persons with Disabilities, Economic and Cultural Center of the Deaf and Blind and Vocational Training Centre of Persons with Disabilities were reinforced, creating conditions for persons with disabilities to give full play to their talents and fulfil their wishes. The proportion of persons with disabilities working for disability-related institutions and organizations continued to increase, with the result that as of 2018

they accounted for 20%, 70%, 50%, 14.3% and 84% respectively of the staff of the central committee of the KFPD, Economic and Cultural Center of the Deaf and Blind, Art Association, Sign Language Interpreters' Association and Furniture Factory of the Deaf, and 100% respectively of the members of the Associations of the Deaf and Blind and the Deaf Football Team.

74. National table tennis tournaments of persons with and without disabilities were organized two times every year, stimulating persons with disabilities to take part in sports and raising public awareness of their potentials. Persons with disabilities of the DPRK successfully competed in paralympic and para games several times during the reporting period, while members of the Art Association performed in some of European countries in 2015 and 2017.

75. A series of initiatives were taken to eliminate physical barriers to participation by persons with disabilities in public activities and provide them with safer and more favourable environment. For instance, the Standards for the Designing of Building Spaces for Persons with Disabilities were revised, and construction of barrier-free infrastructure satisfying international standards is reflected in the plans for the remodeling of the Samjiyon County and construction of the Wonsan Kalmar Coastal Tourist Area, which are well under way. An e-reading room and homepage specially designed for persons with disabilities was set up at the Sci-Tech Complex so that they could access necessary information with ease.

76. Starting in 2015 blind schools and deaf schools revised their curricula to bring them into line with the 12-year compulsory education curricula, which places main emphasis on general education, while combining it properly with vocational training. Symposium and seminar were organized once a year for teachers of blind schools and deaf schools to share achievements and experience gained in their educational work, which proved greatly conducive to improving the quality of education at these schools. A lot of persons with disabilities receive education in the field of their interest through the distance education system established at central or local universities, with their number increasing day by day. Opening and graduation ceremonies of the Rehabilitation Center for Children with Disabilities and the Vocational Training Center of Persons with Disabilities were widely covered by media, raising public interest in education of persons with disabilities.

4. The rights of the elderly

77. Positive steps were taken during the reporting period for the implementing of the Law on the Care of the Elderly including the establishment of a well-organized system of State guidance and supply of materials for the care of the elderly. Non-standing committees for the care of the elderly were organized at the Cabinet, provinces, cities and counties, which are serviced by the central committee of the Federation for the Care of the Elderly, its provincial committees and focal points in the city (or district) people's committees.

78. The Federation for the Care of the Elderly conducted, in accordance with the Strategic Plan for the Care of the Elderly (2016–2018), research and survey, awareness-raising and advocacy activities, training and education, international cooperation and building up of human, material and financial reserves. It also organized associations of art, sport and production of the elderly so that they could spend their remaining years living a worthwhile life.

79. Geriatrics and gerontology, which were formerly an optional subject of medical students or a part of other courses, was developed as a standalone subject in 2016 in medical universities, so that students may acquire extensive knowledge of older persons' diseases. A number of books about the health of the elderly such as Questions and Answers on Older Persons' Diseases and Tips on Health Care of Older Persons were published,

80. A new old home was built in Pyongyang in 2015 and all provincial old homes were modeled on it, while recuperation homes for persons with disabilities were set up in all provinces in 2016–2018, so that the elderly and persons with disabilities who have no means of support could live free from worries under the care of the State.

81. International Day of the Elderly was celebrated every year with much enthusiasm: sports and amusement games of the elderly were organized, art performance and special

service for them arranged at theatres and catering establishments and preferential service provided to them at bases for cultural and leisure activities. It has become common practice for leading officials of the people's power organs to visit the old homes in their locality on this day to offer old people their best wishes and take necessary measures for their living. On the occasion of this day the media gave wide coverage of the individuals who are exemplary in respecting and providing assistance to the elderly, as well as the elderly who voluntarily looked for tasks for the good of society and worked with sincere devotion and patriotic desire.

D. International cooperation in the field of human rights

82. The DPRK remains invariable in its stand to build, through promoting international exchanges and cooperation for the protection and promotion of genuine human rights, a world of independence where people fully enjoy a dignified and equal life in a peaceful environment.

83. The DPRK made its principled stand on protection and protection of human rights widely known at the UN General Assembly meetings, sessions of the UN Human Rights Council and other human rights-related international conferences and seminars.

84. The DPRK submitted its fifth to sixth periodic report on the implementation of CRC and second to fourth periodic report on the implementation of CEDAW for consideration by treaty bodies concerned in September and November 2017 respectively. Ratification by the DPRK of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in November 2014 and the Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities in November 2016, its hosting of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in May 2017 and submission of the initial report on the implementation of CRPD in December 2018 were part of its efforts to promote international cooperation in the field of human rights.

IV. Challenges and future goals

A. Obstacles and challenges

85. Efforts of the DPRK for the protection and promotion of human rights continue to face serious obstacles and challenges. The most serious of them are the UN Security Council sanctions which run counter to human rights and the brutal unilateral sanctions of some countries imposed on the DPRK. These sanctions are obstructing even the delivery of medicines and medical facilities needed for children, women and persons with disabilities, let alone the normal trade with foreign countries for the economic development of the country. Constituting blatant infringement of the right of people to existence, these sanctions are major impediments to the efforts of the DPRK for the protection and promotion of human rights.

86. Politicization, selectivity and double standards which are rampant at the UN Human Rights Council and other international human rights fora constitute another major obstacle to the efforts of the DPRK for the protection and promotion of human rights. Every year hostile forces and some western countries railroad anti-DPRK "human rights resolutions" at the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly, finding "fault" with the fictitious "human rights issue" of the DPRK. They refuse to pay attention to and recognize the initiatives taken by the DPRK for the protection and promotion of human rights, persistently resorting to the false "testimonies" of a handful of "defectors", which are all calculated to tarnish the image of the DPRK, mislead the world public opinion and incite confrontation, and only serve to hamper the positive efforts and enthusiasm of the DPRK for the protection and promotion of human rights.

87. The DPRK will brave out all the challenges and obstructive manoeuvres of the hostile forces and guarantee the people full enjoyment of their rights and resolutely counter all the politically-motivated anti-DPRK human rights moves to the end.

B. Future goals

88. The DPRK is committed to ensuring that all people enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms at a higher level by embodying in all spheres of the State activities the politics of affording priority, respect and love to people.

89. The DPRK will steadily take legislative and practical measures for the protection and promotion of human rights as required by the developing reality and provide people with an affluent and cultured living by channeling all its efforts into economic construction.

90. The DPRK will faithfully fulfill its obligations under the international human rights treaties to which it is a State party, and will make positive contributions to the international efforts for the protection and promotion of human rights by promoting international cooperation and exchanges in the field of human rights based on the principles of impartiality, objectivity and equality.

V. Conclusion

91. The DPRK will, by applying the Juche idea of “The people are my God”, continue to perfect the popular system of human rights safeguards under which people’s interests are given top and absolute priority, and make all possible efforts to ensure that people enjoy the best civilization at the highest level.
