

Opening Statement of Republic of Korea

Thank you, Mr. Chair

Like many member states of the Asia and the Pacific Regional Group, the Republic of Korea also has abundant and diverse genetic resources (GR) and traditional knowledges associated genetic resources (TKaGR). Therefore, we recognize the importance of discussions in this committee and believe that the spirit of fair and equitable benefit sharing arising from genetic resources should be highly respected.

With regard to the discussion on GR, my delegation would like to express our position on several important issues.

First, we have concern that the disclosure requirements present an excessive burden and can lead to unexpected obstacles to those wishing to utilize the patent system. During a series of meetings in the Republic of Korea, users and stakeholders expressed their concerns about the legal uncertainties caused by the disclosure requirements. This could lead to avoidance of the patent system and even bypassing the IP system altogether. We have to keep in mind that IP policies and patent systems exist for its users, therefore, it is important that we focus on its convenience to encourage active use of the system.

Second, we firmly believe that the most effective form of protection for GR and TKaGR in the patent system is by preventing "erroneously granted patents" which can be addressed through the establishment and use of database systems.

And last, my delegation is of the opinion that we prefer non-legally binding instruments at this stage.

We believe that we should consider all aspects of the proposals, perspectives of the users and potential consequences on industry and relevant areas.

We hope that all Member States of WIPO remain open-minded and sincere in our discussions to create new international norms.

Thank you.