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**KGV/128/2023**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and has the honour to submit, as enclosed, the response of the Government of the Republic of Korea to the joint communication from Special Procedures, dated 22 May 2023 (AL KOR 2/2023)

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) the assurances of its highest consideration.

21 July 2023

Enclosed : as stated

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



## **Response of the Government of the Republic of Korea**

### **to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures (AL KOR 2/2023)**

#### **1. Please provide any additional information or comments in relation to the above-mentioned allegations.**

The Government of the Republic of Korea's reorganization proposal is intended not to abolish the policies and functions of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) but to reorganize and integrate it with the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW), etc. for more effective implementation of policies for women, families, and youth which MOGEF has carried out.

The proposed reorganization will not reduce or weaken the policies and functions carried out by MOGEF. Instead, it will integrate the support systems for children, youth, family caregiving, and childcare currently divided between MOGEF and MOHW. The integration will help address the fragmented service-providing systems and strengthen the linkages with MOHW's diverse service delivery systems and health and healthcare policies, ultimately further improving assistance to women, families, and youth.

In addition, women's employment support will be delivered to the public more effectively if implemented with the Ministry of Employment and Labor's substantial policy means and broader infrastructure.

The allegation that the reorganization proposal is designed to abolish MOGEF is far from the truth.

The integration of MOGEF into MOHW will extend the scope of the implementation of gender equality policy into healthcare, social welfare, and low fertility policies. In addition, the reorganization is expected to allow more effective responses to issues in blind spots, such as the human rights and protection of women with disabilities, older women, girls and women in poverty, while laying the foundation for gender equality policy from infancy to old age and throughout people's life cycle.

The bill on the reorganization of MOGEF is being discussed at the National Assembly, and the results of the discussion remain to be seen. However, we would like to provide the following information on some allegations from the joint communication:

1. Under the reorganization proposal, the mandates of MOGEF, as a member of the State Council, including deliberations of and decisions on policies and proposing of bills, will not be lost. All mandates of MOGEF will be transferred to and implemented by MOHW.
2. The part from the communication. "(...) the Government's proposals to cut back on the budget allocated to (...)" is different from the fact. Although some of the budget, such as PR spending, was adjusted, the total budget allocated to the program designed to address digital sex crimes\* was increased, and so were the budgets for gender equality and victim rights protection policies\*\*.

\* (Digital sex crimes) (2022) KRW 3,972M→(2023) KRW 4,184M (up 5.3% or KRW 212M)

\*\* (Gender equality and rights protection) (2022) KRW240,663M→(2023) KRW 246,932M (up 2.6% or KRW 6,269M)

3. The following part of the communication is contrary to the fact: “Moreover, the titles of the coordinating and governing bodies of women’s rights and gender equality within local governments have already changed or are set to change.” At present, all of the 17 local governments have “women” and “gender equality” in the titles of divisions and teams, and all of the local governments, except three of them, have “women” and “gender equality” in the titles of bureaus and offices.
4. The 3rd Basic Plan for Gender Equality Policy (2023-2027) was formulated through joint efforts of related ministries. Regarding the crime of sexual intercourse without consent, MOGEF and the Ministry of Justice had consultations and concluded that the matter requires a careful and comprehensive review, such as in-depth research into overseas legislation and practices and social dialogue.

**2. Please provide clarifications on whether the Government plans to provide an objective assessment and evidence-based justifications for the proposed abolishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.**

As a small-sized organization, MOGEF had limitations in overseeing and coordinating policies for women, youth and families, facing fragmentation and ineffectiveness.

Upon the launch of the new administration, the Government established a strategic task force team within MOGEF, which gathered opinions from experts in women, family and youth policies. After going through the discussion process within the government, the Government laid out the reorganization proposal so that it can serve as the most practical and useful reform from the perspective of the public.

Of the 38 OECD member countries, there are 30 countries where a ministry carries out gender equality policies. It is understood that 21 out of these 30 countries implement gender equality policies through a ministry that is also responsible for other policy areas, including welfare and labor, while the remaining 9 countries have ministries dedicated to women and gender equality policies.

This highlights that many governments are shifting their policy paradigm from focusing on women policies to mainstreaming gender across government policies, and they do that with a body that incorporates other policy areas, such as health, welfare and employment. The Government has put forward its reorganization proposal, in line with this global trend.

**3. Please provide clarifications on how the Government intends to mitigate the negative consequences that may arise from abolishing the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, should the plan go forward, and how the mandate of the**

**Ministry of Gender Equality and Family will be properly assumed and continued by other entities of the Government.**

Of the functions of MOGEF, those related to women's employment will be transferred to the Ministry of Employment and Labor for comprehensive employment support, and all the other functions, staff, and budgets will be passed on to MOHW.

According to this proposal, the change will be made only to the government's organizational structure, and the core functions of MOGEF, including laws and institutions and projects and programs related to gender equality, will be transferred and implemented as before. Therefore, the government's gender-mainstreaming policy will not be disrupted or reduced.

The existing functions of MOGEF, such as policies for families, youth, gender equality and protection will be carried out continuously by MOHW. These functions will also be harmonized with the current MOHW's population policies, such as policies targeting babies, children, the elderly, and low fertility.

In addition, if the reorganization proposal is implemented, the Government will strengthen government-wide cooperation and coordination by facilitating the operation of the Gender Equality Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, in an effort to actively incorporate the perspective of gender equality into overall government policies.

To strengthen the Gender Equality Council's functions of supervision and coordination across the government ministries, the Government plans to consider giving additional mandates to the Council, including making recommendations and monitoring the implementation of follow-up measures. /End/