



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### List of issues in relation to the fifth periodic report of the Republic of Korea\*

1. The State Party is invited to submit in writing the information requested below (preferably not exceeding 10,700 words) by 30 April 2026.

#### A. General information

2. Please provide information on the measures taken, and their impact, to ensure the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights in the State Party's domestic legal order. Please provide information on the cases in which the Covenant's provisions have been invoked before or applied by domestic courts, including the number of such cases and examples thereof. Please provide information on how the legislature was involved in the implementation of and follow-up to the previous concluding observations<sup>1</sup> and in the development of the fifth periodic report.<sup>2</sup>

3. Please provide updated information on the measures taken to implement the Committee's previous concluding observations, including mechanisms in place to coordinate follow-up across relevant ministries and at the local government levels. Please provide information on the extent to which civil society organizations and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea have been involved in the implementation and monitoring process.

4. Please indicate whether the State Party intends to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

5. Please explain whether the State Party systematically collects and publishes disaggregated data (by sex, age, disability, migration status, income level and region) on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and whether such data are used to inform law and policy development.

6. Please provide information on measures taken by the State Party with regard to the mitigation of climate change, including specific measures, and their impact, to meet the nationally determined contributions for reducing emissions that the State Party has set itself under the Paris Agreement. Please also provide information on the progress made in reducing per capita greenhouse gas emissions and on targets that the State Party has set for further reductions. With respect to climate change adaptation policies and measures, please provide information on:

(a) How the State Party assesses the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly for marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and groups;

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-eighth session (8–26 September 2025).

<sup>1</sup> E/C.12/KOR/CO/4.

<sup>2</sup> E/C.12/KOR/5.



(b) Whether the State Party has developed or plans to develop a national adaptation plan, with an adequate allocation of all required resources, to address the impacts of climate change on, inter alia, economic, social and cultural rights;

(c) Measures taken to strengthen preparedness for and responses to natural disasters, disaster risk reduction measures and measures taken to adopt a strategy to this end, with an adequate allocation of financial resources;

(d) Which institutions are tasked with the development and implementation of climate change adaptation measures and policies for slow-onset impacts in different areas, such as agriculture, housing and health, and how coordination among the institutions responsible for disaster preparedness and management is ensured.

## **B. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)**

### **Maximum available resources (art. 2 (1))**

7. Please provide updated information on the evolution of the following, covering the past 10 years:

(a) The proportion of the population living below the nationally defined poverty line;

(b) Levels of inequality, before and after taxes and transfers, if possible defined as the ratio between the total income of the richest 10 per cent of the population and the total income of the poorest 40 per cent and as the ratio between the assets owned by the richest 10 per cent of the population and the assets owned by the poorest 50 per cent;

(c) The economy, in particular through the annual variations of gross domestic product (GDP), GDP per capita and the level of public debt in proportion to GDP;

(d) The proportion of public revenue generated through taxes and as a percentage of GDP, the proportion of public revenue obtained through direct and indirect taxes, the corporate tax revenue rate and the percentage of total revenue generated from personal tax collected on the incomes of the richest 10 per cent of the population, as well as provide an evaluation of the amount of tax evasion and tax avoidance and the fiscal cost of the main tax benefits;

(e) Public expenditure as a percentage of GDP and, within total public expenditure, the proportion of the public budget allocated to social spending, including social security, food, water and sanitation, housing, health and education.

### **Non-discrimination (art. 2 (2))**

8. Please provide updated information on the measures taken to prevent and eliminate discrimination in law and in practice and indicate:

(a) The status and timeline for enacting comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, nationality and socioeconomic status;

(b) Steps taken to address the exclusion of same-sex couples from public benefits and legal recognition, including survivors' pensions, housing policies and health coverage;

(c) Measures to eliminate discriminatory treatment against migrants, refugees and multicultural families in law and practice, including access to public services, housing and social security;

(d) Measures to combat the rise in hate speech and online incitement against minorities, including migrants and LGBTQI persons, and efforts to promote societal awareness and tolerance.

### **Equal rights of men and women (art. 3)**

9. Please provide updated information on legislative and policy measures taken to reduce the gender wage gap, including in the private sector and for non-standard employment, and whether the Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act has been amended to allow for cross-establishment wage comparisons for equal pay claims. Please clarify which steps are being taken to support work-life balance and reduce women's career interruptions, including strengthening of public childcare infrastructure and expansion of parental leave for men across all employment sectors.

10. Please provide information on binding or enforceable measures to increase women's representation in public and political life. Please explain whether the State Party plans to amend the legal definition of sexual violence to reflect the standard of "absence of consent", and how it is addressing emerging forms of gender-based violence, including digital sexual violence.

## **C. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6–15)**

### **Right to work (art. 6)**

11. Please provide updated information on measures taken to ensure the realization of the right to work, including:

(a) Measures in place to guarantee equal access to employment for persons with disabilities, including communication support systems, tailored employment programmes and the elimination of minimum wage exemptions;

(b) Efforts to expand secure, non-precarious employment for migrant workers and refugees, and any plans by the Government to revise the foreign labour visa system to reduce dependency on employers and enable job mobility;

(c) Measures to protect youth and vocational students from hazardous work during on-the-job training and in Meister schools and other specialized high schools, including accident prevention and regulatory oversight;

(d) The impact of budget cuts to the national employment support programme and how the State Party intends to ensure access to meaningful employment assistance for low-income and long-term unemployed persons.

### **Right to just and favourable conditions of work (art. 7)**

12. Please provide updated information on measures taken to ensure the right to just and favourable conditions of work, including how the minimum wage is set, whether it is sufficient to guarantee workers and their families an adequate standard of living and whether the calculation considers actual living costs and household size. Please clarify which legal and policy steps are being taken to ensure that platform workers and non-standard workers, including gig workers and delivery workers, are covered by core labour protections such as the minimum wage, social security and occupational health and safety.

13. Please describe measures taken, and their impact, to address the persistent gender pay gap and poor working conditions in women-dominated sectors, including caregiving and education, and whether pay equity policies are enforced across public and private employers. Please indicate how the Government monitors and addresses poor working conditions in subcontracted and dispatch-based labour, and whether there are effective mechanisms for enforcement and penalties in cases of labour rights violations. Please also explain the scope, reach and frequency of labour inspections, including for sectors and workplaces exempt from the Labour Standards Act, such as those with fewer than five employees.

### **Trade union rights (art. 8)**

14. Please provide updated information on the legal and practical measures taken to ensure the effective exercise of the right to form and join trade unions, to bargain collectively and to strike, including:

- (a) Whether the State Party plans to amend the Trade Union and Labour Relations Adjustment Act to ensure full protection of trade union rights, particularly for non-standard workers, platform workers and subcontracted workers, in accordance with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), of the International Labour Organization;
- (b) Measures taken to address the continued criminal and civil liability imposed on workers for participating in industrial action, including charges of “obstruction of business” and excessive claims for damages and injunctions;
- (c) Information on safeguards in place to prevent retaliation, union-busting and anti-union discrimination by employers, including delays in collective bargaining and undermining of minority unions under the system of a unified bargaining window;
- (d) Whether the State Party plans to revise its designation of “essential services” and eliminate overly broad strike bans, including the treatment of strikes as “social disasters” under disaster management law.

#### **Right to social security (art. 9)**

15. Please provide updated information on the measures taken to ensure universal, adequate and non-discriminatory access to social security, including:

- (a) Steps taken to ensure that national pension benefits provide an adequate standard of living for older persons, and whether the income replacement rate and basic pension levels will be adjusted to meet the cost of living;
- (b) Efforts to close coverage gaps in the pension system, including for temporary, self-employed, freelance and informal workers, and steps to increase participation among youth, women and those whose careers have been interrupted;
- (c) The legal and policy framework in place to guarantee equal access to social protection for non-citizens, including long-term migrants and non-citizens with disabilities, and whether reforms are planned to eliminate exclusionary eligibility criteria.

#### **Protection of the family and children (art. 10)**

16. Please provide updated information on the measures taken to ensure the protection of the family and children, including:

- (a) Steps taken to transition from institutional care to family-type alternative care for children separated from their families owing to abuse or neglect, and whether sufficient investment has been made in foster care and community-based services;
- (b) Measures taken to strengthen early identification and prevention of child abuse, including whether the State Party plans to move from a reactive, report-based approach to a proactive universal child protection system;
- (c) The legal safeguards and support systems in place to prevent filicide-suicide incidents, and to support surviving children and families, especially in cases of economic stress.

#### **Right to an adequate standard of living (art. 11)**

17. Please provide updated information on the supply and accessibility of adequate housing for vulnerable and low-income groups, including those living in *gosiwon*, *jjokbang*, and other substandard forms of accommodation, and whether the Government intends to replace the *jeonse* deposit-based housing system with more stable public rental housing.

18. Please clarify the legal and policy measures in place to ensure access to housing for youth and migrants facing homelessness, and whether the definition of homelessness under the law has been revised to include youth under the age of 18. Please indicate whether the Government has adopted a national housing law or policy framework guaranteeing the right to housing as enforceable under domestic law, and whether rent caps or habitability standards are enforced in public housing.

### **Right to physical and mental health (art. 12)**

19. Please provide updated information on the realization of the right to physical and mental health, including whether the State Party has a comprehensive plan and allocated budget to support deinstitutionalization and independent living for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and what steps are being taken to invest in community-based mental health services.

20. Please clarify which legal and procedural safeguards exist to prevent involuntary hospitalization and non-consensual treatment of persons with mental health conditions, including so-called voluntary admissions with guardian consent. Please provide information on the accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services, including whether abortion has been fully decriminalized and integrated into standard healthcare with equal access across regions. Please describe measures taken, and their impact, to ensure access to healthcare for undocumented migrants and refugees.

### **Right to education (arts. 13 and 14)**

21. Please provide updated information the measures taken to address inequalities in education access and outcomes based on income and social background, dependence on private education and the impact of private education on academic achievement and future employment opportunities.

22. Please explain the measures taken to promote inclusive education for students with disabilities, including the implementation of the Sixth Five-Year Plan for Special Education Development (2023–2027), expansion of such classes in general schools, and safeguards against the overuse of physical restraint or exclusionary practices.

23. Please provide information on measures taken, and their impact, to ensure equal access to education for migrant and undocumented children, including practical barriers in school enrolment and whether the Government plans to expand the eligibility criteria for long-term stayers and undocumented minors. Please describe any plans to revise the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to prevent the exclusion of students in crisis or with behavioural challenges, and to ensure individualized support for vulnerable children.

### **Cultural rights (art. 15)**

24. Please indicate the steps taken to guarantee effective cultural participation for persons with disabilities, including investment in accessible cultural infrastructure, inclusive programming, and communication support such as interpretation and assistive technology. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure the cultural rights of migrants, refugees and linguistic minorities, including support for intercultural festivals, community initiatives and mother tongue education, and whether these measures are supported in law and policy.

25. Please clarify whether the Government has introduced legal safeguards to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access to digital platforms and cultural content online, including protections against algorithmic bias and arbitrary content removal. Please provide data on access to cultural activities for older persons, particularly older persons with disabilities, and indicate whether intergenerational and community-based cultural engagement is being promoted within the framework of the Sixth Comprehensive Policy Plan on Persons with Disabilities (2023–2027).