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E-PAR

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Panel Discussion on e-Parliament

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Distinguished delegates,

In line with the dramatic development of information and communications technologies and the exponential increase of Internet subscribers, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea has been making consistent efforts to transform itself into an open parliament through informatization and the launch of an e-Parliament.

The primary goal of e-Parliament is to enhance transparency in the legislative process so that the public can gain better insights into the process.

By effectively assisting parliamentary activities such as legislation, deliberation of budget and accounts, and inspection and investigation of state affairs and by providing the public with relevant information produced in these processes, the Korean National Assembly aims to satisfy people's right to know and encourage their active participation in politics.

(In light of this, the Korean National Assembly has set a concrete goal to establish an 'advanced e-Parliament of the 21st century' and unveiled three basic informatization guidelines namely, establishing a knowledge-based parliament, networking legislative information, and realizing an open-Parliament through informatization.)

The National Assembly information services are divided into two categories; the Legislative Knowledge Management System and the Library Information Service. The Legislative Knowledge Management System provides the public with an easy-to-use search tool so that they can access information on laws, budget and accounts, and many other pending issues facing each standing committee and acquire data essential to participate in politics.

Meanwhile, the Library Information Service provides services on legislative information, legislation knowledge database, digital library, legislative bills database, academic database, and etc. to support political activities.

(At the end of the day, the Korean National Assembly aims to realize open-Parliament and design the framework for e-Democracy through informatization by working out measures to network the Assembly, facilitate public participation in politics, and strengthen support for knowledge management system and other political activities.)

Citizens can access all relevant documents including those on laws, budget, minutes and bills systematically incorporated into a database. In particular, they can watch meetings on the plenary, the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts, and other major hearings broadcast on-line either live or recorded from the comfort of home or at work and gain real-time knowledge on how bills and other pending issues directly affecting their daily lives are handled at the Assembly.

The Korean National Assembly has also launched an on-line civil service center as a means to reinforce direct contact with the public. The service was made available in English starting from 2003 for overseas Koreans and foreigners residing in Korea.

Moreover, decisions at the plenary are, in principle, made through the electronic voting system to ensure accurate and immediate tally, record, and announcement of results.

Utilizing the Internet and e-Parliament build upon the latest information and communications technologies, parliamentarians are striving to make their political activities more transparent and to pay more heed to the voices of their voters. Some even went so far as to encourage active political discussions in the cyber space using electronic forums on the web.

As part of its long-term plan, the Korean National Assembly aims to share with local assemblies a complete e-Parliament system to build upon and connect them with the National Assembly in a single network.

Thank you.