

*National Case Report*  
by  
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**“ICT and Social Integration”**

Distinguished representatives from around the world,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to H.E. Severino Cavalcanti, Speaker of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, the staff members and the people of Brazil for sparing no effort to make this Third General Assembly of the International Parliamentarians' Association for Information Technology (IPAIT) a resounding success.

As the Vice Speaker of the Korean National Assembly, it gives me a great pleasure to see the Association, first launched in Seoul, Korea in 2002 to raise its curtain for the Third General Assembly here in Brazil, a country endowed with vast land and blessed with infinite potential.

Distinguished delegates,

As you may be well aware, Korea has stood at the forefront of the whirlwind changes of the “Digital

Revolution". Today, as a result, more than two-thirds of the Korean people have access to the Internet and Korea has the world's highest broadband penetration rate. Thanks to its efforts to step up the development of core technologies, moreover, Korea was able to develop for the first time in the world mobile internet technology and open up an era of Satellite Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (DMB).

Information and communications technology (ICT), however, is a mere "instrument" in realizing our greater ideal, that is, democracy and balanced economic development. The 21<sup>st</sup> century 'Information Society' that we envision is far from one where the disabled, elderly, and underprivileged that were marginalized in the 'industrial society' are again deprived of economic opportunities and excluded from social and political participation. In this sense, we the parliamentarians have an important role to play. We need to provide a vision and realize social inclusion so that informatization can lift the lives of each and every individual without marginalizing anyone.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to present to you the efforts the Korean National Assembly exerted to bring about a genuine 'Digital Welfare Society' by breathing in warmth into cold digital.

In the late 1990s, Korea introduced the "Framework Act on Informatization Promotion" and launched campaigns such as "Cyber Korea 21" and "Informatization

Training for 10 Million People” to make ICT more accessible. Furthermore, it enacted the “Digital Divide Act” in 2001 led by the National Assembly and secured a powerful engine to propel the participation in the Information Society of people from all walks of lives.

Based on such institutional basis, Korea is distributing ICT devices including personal desk-top computers mainly to households in the low income bracket. Besides, it is expanding high-speed Internet infrastructure so that students in farming and fishing villages can have unrestrained access to the Internet and enjoy educational benefits. All in all, an extensive provision of Internet services is not only transforming the lives of people but also is providing a new opportunity to proactively generate income.

The case in point is “Hwang-Doon Village”, a far-off hamlet in the mountains of Gangwon Province in Korea. The village is so remotely located that even watching TV was beyond reach. With the provision of the high-speed Internet network and personal computers, however, the village once considered an ‘inland island’ has transformed so dramatically that even ‘video telemedicine’ is within reach today. Not only that, farmers there are earning substantially increased income by selling their produce conveniently through direct on-line marketplaces. “Hwang-Doon Village”, in other words, has now become a “Cyber Village” that deserves worldwide recognition.

Distinguished representatives,

The world is faced with yet another challenge, that is, the advent of an “aging society”. In this light, Korea has launched senior-centered informatization education and training programs to ensure easy Internet access for the mid-aged and elderly increasing gradually in an aging society. Furthermore, it is spearheading efforts to develop and deliver “ICT assistive devices” including “screen magnifiers”.

As a matter of fact, the Internet was widely utilized in Korea in the 17<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election as a tool to take part in the political process. Unexpectedly, however, a new problem of political marginalization emerged as 50 or older mid-aged and elderly voters not familiar with the Internet were relatively kept out from the political process.

No one would disagree that a distortion in representativeness where the interests of a certain group of people are unevenly reflected is a grave threat to democracy. In this sense, I call on every one of you to pay particular attention on this issue so that everyone regardless of their status can equally enjoy the fruits of informatization and informatization can serve as a new locomotive to advance democracy.

Distinguished representatives,

As a leading informatization country, Korea plays an essential role to share its experience with the entire global village. In particular, Korea’s endeavor to transfer internet

technologies and policy know-hows to developing countries epitomized by such initiatives as the "Korea Internet Volunteers" and the "Center on Closing the Digital Divide in Developing Countries" are widely appreciated in these countries. A month ago in May, Korea was also approved in the meeting of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) to establish an "ICT Training Center" in Songdo, Incheon City, thereby laying a new groundwork to offer informatization training to ICT policy managers and engineers in the region.

Before closing, I would like to propose once again to the members of the International Parliamentarians' Association for Information Technology to join forces to turn digital information and communications technologies into an "instrument" to realize common prosperity for the entire humanity.

Thank you for your attention.