

Name:

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Committee:

ESCAP - Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Topic:

Topic 2 - How to Rebuild the Asia Pacific after 1.5 years of lockdown: The Pandemic Environment

Delegate of (which country):

Republic of Korea (South Korea)

Introduction:

Covid has struck the nations in the Asia-Pacific with a lockdown for over two years. The effects of the pandemic environment have massively changed the lifestyle of everyone. The rebuilding of the Asia Pacific economy and lifestyle is a current issue as it has almost been two years and solutions must be found. This pandemic is much more than a health crisis. It is also a human economic and social crisis and definitely needs to be looked at. The problems this pandemic has created can be seen in mass unemployment, industries being destroyed, health infrastructures pushed to their limits and businesses being pushed to the brink. There are many groups of people that have been severely affected by the lockdowns. Recently more and more people are getting vaccinated. More than 4.4 billion people have had more than one dose- which is about 56% of the world population. According to an article from Nature "The vaccines have had a huge impact on averting deaths and helping country's economies return to normal," says Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland. However, the problem still falls to the nations in the Asia Pacific to address the problems created. Some of these nations have low incomes as most have a comparably low percentage of the population being vaccinated. For example, Myanmar, on the data of CSIS, The GDP growth rate projection of Myanmar was predicted to be a -17.9% with the current covid-19 situation whereas the pre-covid was a 7.7%. Myanmar has one of the lowest percentages of the full population being vaccinated. The covid-19 situation has been getting better especially because of the vaccines however recently a new variant called the omicron variant has been detected in South Africa and it has been spreading worldwide.

Countries stance:

As stated by worldometer.info, As of January 2022 The Republic Of Korea is currently 5th amongst the nations of the Asia Pacific region with the highest amount of active cases, with the number of above 100,000 cases (as of January 2022). Despite its robust health system, South Korea struggled to respond appropriately to the 2015 outbreak of MERS, which resulted in nearly 17,000 suspected cases and 38 deaths. During the six months of that outbreak, the government lost an estimated US\$2.6 billion in tourism revenue while spending almost US\$1 billion on diagnosis, treatment, and other parts of its response. Coming prepared from the 2015 outbreak South Korea has been using a contact tracing system that alerts and helps notify the populace of The Republic of Korea within the areas of the paths of infection of those who have tested positive. This has helped lower the cases as South Korea received a massive surge of covid-19 cases at the beginning of the pandemic. This solution helped lower the cases. After MERS, the country made a total of 48 reforms to boost public health emergency preparedness and response, including more infection control staff and isolation units, expanded outbreak simulations and PPE training, and community-based collaboration between medical centers and local governments. Recently, South Korea has been working with WHO (World Health Organisation). The president of the Republic of Korea, Moon Jae In called for an inclusive recovery out of the COVID-19 pandemic and pledged to deliver on his nation's pledge to provide \$200 million in funding for the international COVAX vaccine equity initiative. KDCA (Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency) has also

announced that it has signed an agreement with MODERNA to purchase additional 20 million doses of vaccines for 2022, securing a total of 80 million doses of mRNA vaccines.

South Korea faced significant economic disruption, however, including large job losses. The government responded by providing subsidies to businesses for payroll and to unemployment insurance and low-interest loans to low-income job seekers. The government also lowered insurance premiums for social safety net programs for individuals and businesses. All households, regardless of income, received a disaster relief payment of KRW 400,000 (US\$344) for single-person households, KRW 600,000 (US\$516) for two-person households, KRW 800,000 (US\$688) for three-person households, and KRW 1 million (US\$859) for households with four or more members.

Resolution:

South Korea is ready to take any chances and solutions to help rebuild South Korea economically and socially.

- South Korea believes that encouraging and supporting people to take vaccinations can help decrease the overall covid cases rates as it can help reduce the spread and risk of getting the virus. It can also help with slowly recovering to a more normal life in general
- South Korea also recommends debt swaps as these can help to promote sustainable development and long-term economic resilience. South Korea works with a lot of NGOs which makes it easier to follow this solution.
- South Korea advocates for providing subsidies to businesses for payroll and to unemployment insurance and low-interest loans to low-income job seekers.
- According to Reuters.com, “Moon, after an emergency meeting with economic policymakers, said an “emergency disaster relief payment” of up to 1 million won (\$820) would be made to all households except the top 30% by income, totalling some 9.1 trillion won (\$7.44 billion).” This was at the start of the year of 2020 when the pandemic had recently started. South Korea recommends continuing this with government payments to families that are struggling due to the economic pandemic.

government payments to families, the pandemic reforms

Resources:

Issue in general:

An Asian strategy for recovery and reconstruction after COVID-19

Economic Recovery in East Asia and Pacific Faces Setback

Five windows of opportunity for postpandemic Asia

Southeast Asia's post-pandemic recovery outlook

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included-covid-19.html>

- **[UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on South-East Asia](#)**

[COVID-19 Outbreak and Gender: Key Advocacy Points from Asia and the Pacific](#)

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

Korean specific:

[Coronavirus latest: South Korea hits biggest caseload in 2 months](#)

[Coronavirus latest: South Korea reports record new cases](#)

[Coronavirus: South Korea axes quarantine exemptions to tackle Omicron as cases hit new highSouth Korea accused of discrimination over vaccine recognition](#)

https://go.gale.com/ps/retrieve.do?resultListType=RELATED_DOCUMENT&searchType=ts&userGroupName=idbaliis&inPS=true&contentSegment=&prodId=GIC&docId=GALE|CP3208530087&it=r

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-agrees-expansion-covid-19-vaccine-production-south-korea-2021-05-22/>

South Korea considers tightening COVID-19 rules as new cases climb to daily record

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/skorea-sets-virus-record-officials-plan-restrictions-81759349>

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/world/2021/12/15/s.korea-considers-tightening-covid-19-rules-as-new-cases-climb-to-daily-rec/2028522>

<https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Speeches/1125>

Solutions / Resolutions:

<https://sites.google.com/view/balimun-x/committees-research-resources>

