

**Commission:** Committee of environment

**Question:** An eco-farming revolution

**Author:** Delegation of South Korea

Honorable chairs, fellow delegates,

The delegation of South Korea is delighted to participate to NUMAD 2017 and looks forward for enlightening conversation between the different delegations. Agriculture and eco-farming is a very important subject for the delegation of South Korea.

Agriculture is a sector of the Economy of South Korea. The natural resource for agriculture in South Korea is not abundant. Two thirds of the country are mountains and hills.

Arable land only accounts for 22 percent of the country's land. The most important crop in South Korea is rice, accounting about 90 percent of the country's total grain production and over 40 percent of farm income. Other grain products heavily rely on imports from other countries.

Rice production in Korea increased from 4 million tons in 1970 to today's level of 6 million tons. In 2009, South Korea produced 3,899,036 metric tonnes (4,297,951 tons) of rice. The amount of land planted to rice has remained largely the same. Thus, the increase in rice production in Korea has been achieved primarily by raising yields. The use of pesticides has been a key factor in the increase in Korean rice yields.

Rice has always been and continues to be an important food crop for Korea. In the past, to ensure high rice production, the government subsidized inputs, like fertilizers and pesticides, rice prices and conduct intensive pest monitoring to issue instructions to farmers and exercise mass spraying.

Recently however in recognizing the importance of environment and sustainability, the government enacted several agricultural policies that had changed rice landscapes, farmer practices, pesticide consumption and pest situations. From the 1960s to late 1980s, emphases were on production increase (Green Revolution) with strong government drive and heavy fertilizer and pesticide use. From the 1980s the Korean rice consumption declined from 120 kg/capita/year in 1980 to about 70 kg in 2010 and the government started to discourage rice farming and support sustainability. In late 1990s the government adopted clean production and environmental friendly agriculture (EFA) policies.

To implement EFA the government established the infrastructure for EFA promotion to farmers. EPA farmer cooperatives were supported and a certification system for EFA products was set up. Marketing and promotion of EFA products were enhanced.

With the implementation of EFA, rice production transformed. Pesticide and fertilizer subsidies were terminated. Instead the government started a drive for clean production and no pesticide use. Pesticide distribution and marketing regulations were revised and implemented together with promotion and incentives to farmers for conservation.

The delegation of South Korea is delighted to participate to debates based on this important subject. We are looking forward to contribute to the improvement of

farming methods in order to reduce the risk and danger that pesticides cause on health.

Thank you for your attention.

- Chiara Barbeschi