DELEGATE: Elif Naz Yanmaz

COUNTRY: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea

COMMITTEE: SOCHUM (Social, Cultural & Humanitarian Committee)

ISSUE: Unemployment of People Who Have Physical and Mental Impairments

 North Korea, officially named the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), is a country in East Asia. It divides up the northern part of the Korean Peninsula and borders South Korea to the south at the Korean Demilitarized Zone, as well as China and Russia to the north at the Yalu (Amnok) and Tumen rivers. Due to competing claims to the entire Korean Peninsula, North and South Korea's border is in question. The Yellow Sea forms the country's western boundary, and the Sea of Japan establishes its eastern border. Like South Korea, North Korea asserts that it is the rightful ruler of the entire peninsula and its neighboring islands. The capital and largest city is Pyongyang. (1) The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a totalitarian nation with a strong central government. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is an authoritarian state led by the Kim family for 70 years.

Even though Iran is one of the world's poorest nations, it yet has one of the biggest militaries and invests a lot of money in ballistic missile and illegal nuclear weapon projects. (2) North Korea is frequently referred to as the "hermit kingdom" due to its isolation; the name initially described the isolationism in the latter half of the Joseon Dynasty. Early on, North Korea's only diplomatic relations were with other communist nations, and even now, Beijing, rather than Pyongyang, is home to the majority of the foreign embassies accredited to North Korea. It developed an autonomous foreign policy in the 1960s, built relationships with a large number of developing nations, and joined the Non-Aligned Movement. The dissolution of the Soviet Bloc in the 1990s disrupted its foreign policy. It experienced an economic crisis and had to close several of its embassies. North Korea also aimed to establish ties with developed nations that have free markets. (3) The Republic of Korea (commonly known as South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were simultaneously admitted to the United Nations (UN) in 1991.

 In developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%. The official unemployment rate for people with disabilities who are working age is typically at least twice that of people without disabilities. (4) It is particularly challenging to compile statistical data to paint a comprehensive picture of the position of impaired persons within the labor market. This is partly because few Member States consistently or routinely conduct surveys on the state of employment for people with disabilities. The fact that each Member State has its own approach for classifying the disabled population further complicates comparisons of the situation at the EU level. (5) In the other hand, mental health is also an important factor in this topic. Unemployment has a detrimental impact on mental health, as does poor quality employment. The two main topics of this lengthy read are unemployment and mental health. Prior to the epidemic, the UK's unemployment rate was at an all-time low; but, as a result of pandemic limitations, it has since started to rise and is likely to do so further. (6) New initiatives to assist reduce unemployment include employment programs like JETS and RESTART, which concentrate on short- and long-term unemployment, respectively. These programs emphasize practical job-seeking skills, including CV writing, interview technique, and job-hunting advice. (7) The European Commission is presenting the Disability Employment Package to support Member States in ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy social inclusion and economic autonomy through employment. The package is part of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 and is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (8)

According to the nonprofit organization Handicap International, it has been functioning in North Korea since 1999, supporting the Korean Federation for the Protection of crippled individuals, including orthopedic clinics that care for thousands of crippled individuals. According to a report from the International Committee of the Red Cross from 2006, the organization helped establish a rehabilitation facility for disabled individuals in Pyongyang and continued to fund rehabilitation programs up until 2017. North Korea, according to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, "has a comprehensive system for assisting persons with disabilities; however, this system is limited by the general economic situation of the country." (9) People with disabilities in North Korea were allegedly "subjected to harsh and sub-human conditions" in camps around the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 2006, Vitit Muntarbhorn, the special rapporteur on human rights for the UN, revealed that North Koreans with impairments were detained in camps and kept outside of Pyongyang, the nation's flashy capital. "Collective camps for midgets" were reportedly real, and it was banned for inmates to have children, according to defectors. (10)

 Just like others, the majority of persons with disabilities want a dignified and productive life. Employment provides not only income but also opportunities for social participation. This is especially important for persons with disabilities. Spending on systems and facilities for persons with disabilities is not for the privilege of a small minority, but an investment for everyone. Many companies have found that by employing persons with disabilities they have been better able to understand and serve their customers with disabilities. Adapting services to meet the diverse needs of persons with disabilities allows business to develop greater flexibility, builds reputation and reaches out to a sizeable market.

References:

1. *North Korea - Wikipedia. (2014, November 29). North Korea - Wikipedia.* [*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North\_Korea*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea)
2. *Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) country brief. (n.d.). Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea/democratic-peoplesrepublic-of-korea-north-korea-country-brief*
3. Wertz, Daniel; JJ Oh; Kim Insung (August 2015). ["Issue Brief: DPRK Diplomatic Relations"](http://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/NCNK_Issue_Brief_DPRK_Diplomatic_Relations.pdf) (PDF). The National Committee on North Korea. pp. 1–7, n4.*[Archived](https://web.archive.org/web/20160304085503/http%3A/www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/NCNK_Issue_Brief_DPRK_Diplomatic_Relations.pdf) (PDF)*from the original on 4 March 2016*. Retrieved 17 April 2016*.
4. *Debra A. Perry, ‘Disability issues in the employment and social protection’, ILO Bangkok, 2002*
5. *Raising Employment Levels of People with Disabilities - The Common Challenge | Independent Living Institute. (n.d.). Raising Employment Levels of People With Disabilities - the Common Challenge | Independent Living Institute. <https://www.independentliving.org/docs3/ec1550.html>*
6. *Unemployment and mental health*. (2021, April 16). The Health Foundation. https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/unemployment-and-mental-health
7. [*https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\_emp/---ifp\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\_173498.pdf*](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_173498.pdf)
8. *Disability Employment Package to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities. (2022, November 24). Disability Employment Package to Improve Labour Market Outcomes for Persons With Disabilities - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1597&langId=en*
9. [*"North Korea"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20120702152154/http%3A/www.handicap-international.org.uk/where_we_work/asia/north_korea)*. Handicap International. Archived from [the original](http://www.handicap-international.org.uk/where_we_work/asia/north_korea) on July 2, 2012. Retrieved July 29, 2012.*

[*"North Korea: ICRC inaugurates a second physical rehabilitation centre"*](https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2009-and-earlier/north-korea-news-240406.htm). International Committee of the Red Cross. April 24, 2006*. Retrieved June 20, 2014*.

1. [*"North Korea locks up disabled in 'subhuman' gulags, says UN"*](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1532036/North-Korea-locks-up-disabled-in-subhuman-gulags-says-UN.html)*, [The Daily Telegraph](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Telegraph%22%20%5Co%20%22The%20Daily%20Telegraph), October 21, 2006*