

Information Report for Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

the United Nations Human Rights Council

–written by ECPAT Korea Tacteen

1. Protection of Children's Adult Rights - Sexual Abuse of Children and Juveniles (teenage entertainers)

Korean idol groups, composed of boys and girls in their teens, are being forced to expose their body excessively or perform sexualized dance routines in public: juveniles are being treated like sexual commodities. For instance, a sixth-grade primary school girl, who became famous by appearing on a popular TV drama of 2012, appeared in a advertisement in a sexy posture wearing a see-through dress.

According to a survey conducted by Korea's Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, of teenage entertainers and aspiring entertainers, titled 'A Fact Finding Analysis of Teenage Entertainers' Sexual Protection, Right to Work and Right to Study,' 36% of the respondents worked more than eight hours a day and 10.2% exposed parts of their body they would not normally reveal in public. 60% of those who experienced excessive exposure said they were forced to do so. This proves that entertainment agencies in Korea are manipulating teenage and aspiring entertainers sexually for the purpose of increasing their commercial profits. In addition, according to the same survey, 9.1% of the respondents were subjected to sexual acts such as fondling, cuddling and kissing during their

entertainment career. 4.5% of them were exposed to obscenities, vulgarism, sexual harassment and sexual temptation. Therefore, we are strongly asking for Korean teenage entertainers to be protected sexually, for their right to study to be respected, and for them not to be forced to work excessively.

2. Punishment of Production, Sale and Possession of Child Pornography

In Korea, according to Article 8 (Production, Distribution, etc. of Child or Juvenile Pornography) of the Act on the Protection of Children and Juveniles from Sexual Abuse, revised in February 2008, the simple possession of pornography featuring children or juveniles shall be punished by a fine not exceeding KRW 20 million. However, law enforcement is far from sufficient. In the area of production and distribution of child pornography, only three cases were prosecuted in 2008, twelve cases in 2009 and eighty-two cases in 2010. In the area of simple possession, only three people, the representatives of a file sharing site, were arrested in 2010 for their possession and distribution of child pornography: a poor record given that the law was enacted in 2008.

We therefore strongly request that the investigation and punishment of the possession of child pornography be enforced rigorously. We also demand that the government strongly punish those P2P sites that neglect their obligation to monitor the distribution of child pornography on their sites.

3. Injurious Online Advertisements

According to Article 17 of The U.N. Convention on the Rights of Children, the mass media are under the obligation to disseminate beneficial information to children and prevent injurious information from reaching children. However the reality in Korea is that online ads, which are widely open to children on the Internet, are too sensational sexually. Sexually explicit ads are flooding Internet news articles, to which children are widely exposed to, with sensational photos, obscene writings and erotic cartoons. The reality is that when children access the Internet, sexually explicit ads pop up immediately along with the sensational news of the portal site. At least the news articles and any other writings that children might read should be free of such ads. The Naeil Women's Center for Youth (Tacteen Counseling Center) raised this issue at a famous local portal site in 2011 and initiated a petition and a signature-seeking drive. We demand that the government take immediate action. The government must order the local portal sites and Internet news providers to immediately delete their sexually explicit ads and cartoons that are just open to children and juveniles without any restrictive measures. The government must also include Internet ethics education as part of a regular curriculum at school so that children and juveniles will be mentally equipped to protect themselves from harmful information.

4. School Violence

In accordance with a 'fact finding research survey on school violence' among primary, middle and high school children across the nation conducted by the Juvenile Violence Prevention Foundation in 2010, 61% of the respondents said that they had suffered from

school violence, while 14.8% said that the first time they experienced school violence was between the 1st and 3rd grades at primary school, indicating a remarkable increase from 2009, when the rate was 11%. The fact that the perpetrators of school violence are getting younger and nastier may be attributed to a problem with personality education at school, a lack of genuine guidance efforts for assailants, and the fact that the age at which children gain access to various harmful media is getting ever younger. Still, the government has failed to look at the problem head on so far. It rather turns the blame directly on to the children and juvenile assailants and focuses on controlling them. 33.4% of primary school children said that there was one student or more in their class being bullied according to a survey on Bullying at Primary Schools conducted by the True Education Research Center (Chamgyoyook Yeonguso) of the Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union (JeonGyoJo). According to a survey conducted by the Juvenile Violence Prevention Foundation, entitled A Yearly Comparison of the Reaction to School Violence 2007-2010, 62% of the respondents said that they had pretended not to have seen it whenever they witnessed school violence, representing an almost twofold increase from 2007, when the rate was 35%. The root of the problem is the lukewarm attitude of the government, which limits the problem to the relationship between perpetrators and victims, blames children, and tries to control them when accidents happen. Perpetrators of school violence are also victims in a sense. The overall social environment and atmosphere is to blame, too. Examples abound including the overall atmosphere of fierce competition in our society, the over-concentration of school curricula on college admission and the over-emphasis on physical appearance that is sweeping our community. The government must approach the problem fundamentally and structurally.

5. Ratification of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Protocol

We strongly ask the government to ratify the Prevention of Human Trafficking Protocol. Although the National Assembly Women's Council worked hard to have the Prevention of Human Trafficking Protocol to be passed at the National Assembly of Korea in 2010, the protocol has not been ratified yet. The result is that children and juveniles are being sexually exploited on one hand, while some children and juveniles are getting involved in prostitution to earn the money required for cosmetic surgery on the other. There is no reason for any delay in the national implementation and ratification of the protocol. The situation is rather awkward given the status of Korea in the international community as well. The government must ratify the Prevention of Human Trafficking Protocol promptly.