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1. National Solidarity against the Sexual Exploitation of Women is a coalition of local women’s human rights organizations designed to rescue, support, and consult women in prostitution in over 13 different regions. It was created to better respond to the issues associated with prostitution, after the tragedies in 2000 and 2002 at Daemyeong-dong and Gaebok-dong in Gunsan, in which fires killed a large number of women in brothels.
2. We, women’s human rights organizations in Korea against prostitution, promote decriminalizing the women in prostitution to ensure their human rights while criminalizing the buying of sex and pimping with heavier sentences. We will not stop our fight to dismantle the exploitative structure of the sex industry.

**A Submission to CEDAW Committee**

South Korea

National Solidarity against Sexual Exploitation of Women

Moongchi, the Network of Women with Prostitution Experience

**National Solidarity against Sexual Exploitation of Women**

**2019. 2. 21**

From a history of colonization that saw the implementation of public prostitution and military sexual slavery under Japanese rule, to sexual provision toward American military during the Korean War and the Cold Wars, and to launching sex tourism for economic development, Korea has a special history regarding prostitution.

Korea is a society where patriarchy and male centrism is strong and violence against women is pervasive. It has not been long since prostitution was approached as a matter of women’s rights issue. This is the very reason CEDAW has requested the Korean government several times to comply with the convention regarding prostitution, sexual exploitation, trafficking and promote human rights by ending discrimination against women.

South Korea has the highest gender pay gap in OECD countries. Women are vulnerable and percentage of women inside sex industry is high. North Korean escapee women, Filipina women, Thai women, Russian women are brought into Korean sex industry are increasing.

For now, the percentage of foreign women in sex industry is not accounted for and nor are the methods by which they were trafficked. The only thing certain is that the scale is increasing.

Korean male culture that normalizes buying sex is one factor, and another is that as Korean women gain more economic power, women from poorer countries are brought in to fill the gaps.

The feminist movement in Korea fights against the male culture that takes prostitution for granted, fights to rid women of the conditions that make them vulnerable to prostitution, and support them. We continue to call for a change of policy to make it clear that prostitution is violence against women and exploitation by decriminalization of prostituted women and criminalization of sex buying and procuring.

The Committee’s reviewing of Article 6 in the context of migration and use of language such as “forced prostitution” will lead to disregarding the realities of the 3rd World countries and worsen it. Global economy has left only two choices,”migration for ‘sex work’” and “forced prostitution” for women from 3rd World countries. They fill the sex markets of the 1st World countries where

White men are provided lists of prostituted women from all races to actualize their sexual fantasies and racism on. This abominable racism is justified as trade, work, contract. Why must women of color, from impoverished 3rd World countries be a ‘sex worker’ for White men in 1st World? Why frame gender injustice and economic injustice as “voluntary migration” and “voluntary work” and make the women responsible?

Sexual exploitation of women is society’s responsibility and a matter of justice. Sexual exploitation of women must be addressed within the flow to change the structures that oppress women. The influence CEDAW has in each countries and local women’s movement is big. Survivors and women’s movement in Asia are pioneering a wave that “objects to all forms of sexual exploitation against women.” We urge the Comittee not to go against it.

**Moongchi, the Network of Women with Prostitution Experience**

**2019. 2. 19**

**Separating “forced” prostitution and “voluntary” prostitution erases women’s voices and the only thing left standing will be the voluntary ‘sex’ industry of the sex buyers and pimps.**

Moongchi, the Network of Women with Prostitution Experience is a network of women with prostitution experience. We expose the nature of prostitution and the ways women are sold in the field of prostitution hoping that nobody suffers what we have.

We hope women in all the countries of the world do not suffer the pain we suffer due to the contradictions made from dichotomizing prostitution as ‘forced’ or ‘voluntary’.

The Prostitution laws in South Korea punishes women who prostituted herself ‘voluntarily’. Proving that she was prostituted by ‘force’ is a deeply humiliating procedure and still in many cases women are punished at the discretion of the police and prosecutors. We think such laws bind women with prostitution experience to the field of prostitution. The field of prostitution is a space that can never be ‘voluntary’ for women. Disregarding that fact and speaking of ‘forced’ prostitution is like saying there is prostitution that is not forced.

Separating prostituted women into “forced” or “voluntary” obscures the vision on the problems of prostitution itself and fixes the focus on the matter of the prostituted women’s choice. If so, all the responsibility falls to the women. We all must acknowledge that brothel owners, pimps and the sex buyers who hide behind, exploit and oppress women are at the core of the problem of prostitution.

There was a time when we who have experienced prostitution could not think of all the violence and threats we went through as ‘violence’. On the contrary we believed it was natural because violence was a routine inside prostitution and it was the life of every women in it. We know now that those violences can never be natural and that nobody should suffer from them.

We never imagined we could get help from the police or the government. Because in their eyes I, we were ‘voluntary’ prostitutes. We hope women with prostitution experience do not have to exert themselves to prove they were ‘forcefully’ prostituted. We hope they could reach out for help when they are in danger or in need of assistance. This is what we, as women with prostitution experience want.

We call on the CEDAW Committee to make an effort to hold traffickers and pimps responsible for their crimes against women and provide every kind of assistance for women who suffer.

We urge you to see prostitution itself as a matter of violence against women.