



35th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises
Oral Statement Delivered by Youngsin Kim on behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Friday, 09 June 2017

Mr. Chairperson,

I am a 29 years old South Korean. Two years ago, I became blind because of methanol poisoning.

Many of you may know of Samsung or LG cell phones. I lost my eyesight and got brain damaged in making a cell phone like the ones you own. I had to work 12 hours a day, day and night, without one day off for two weeks at a third-tier supplier for Samsung Electronics. Phones like those you have in your hands plucked my life away.

I am not the only one. There are at least five other young South Korean workers with the same story.

No response. No apology. No compensation. There was no justice from the Government nor the company.

We were used and abandoned like a disposable paper cup. No one told me that it is illegal to dispatch workers in manufacturing business in South Korea. No one told me methanol is dangerous.

The owner of my company said he does not have any money to compensate me. He said he didn't know methanol is harmful.

Samsung and LG say it is not their responsibility. I became blind making Samsung and LG cell phones. I have to live blind all my life. But it is not their problem.

Victims like me are often young. What we want is simple. To have a happy life just like everyone.

Samsung and LG must be accountable. The South Korean government should also take responsibility for this, because human's life, our lives, are more important than business profit.

Thank you