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## Movement against WTO and Opening Import of Rice in Korea in 2000

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The agriculture of Korea has faced crisis of collapse due to openness of trade since Uruguay Round. Korea's agriculture is under the government's restructuring based on neo-liberal policies, which pursues the enlargement of the minority and will be collapsing middle and small farmers representing the majority of the farmers. Accordingly, women farmers' status as a producer is getting unstable. And the reality of Korea's agriculture and women farmers is that more women farmers are engaging additionally in low-wage labor to preserve farm families' low income, such as work at restaurants and in agricultural and industrial complexes and service business, while they have fallen into agricultural wage laborers.

### - Fight against Korea-Chile Free Trade Agreement

Now one free trade agreement representing WTO is under negotiation in Korea. The first opposite party for free trade negotiation is Chile. The problem raised here is that Chile is a huge agricultural exporter.

The Korean Government is now negotiating with the view to conclude this free trade agreement with Chile within this year, while Korean agricultural groups and scholars in Korea are displaying fights demanding the government exclude the agricultural part from the negotiation, showing the result that if it is included, the loss in Korea's agriculture will be huge.

### - Activities to protect our rice, in preparation for the re-negotiation in 2004

In Uruguay Round in 1995, Korea achieved 10 years delay in imposing a custom duty on rice. And, up to now, the import quota of rice has been up to 4% of the output produced in Korea. However, the Korea Government is now proceeding with the policy of reduction of rice production without any negotiation of the re-negotiation near at hand, premising that the re-negotiation in 2004 will conclude complete opening. Given the government introduced Compensation System for Resting Rice-Field as one of the policies for the reduction of rice production, the situation is already rushing up to the opening of rice import at policy level.

Currently, farmers, women, civil and environmental groups altogether have constituted an organization called Agriculture Reviving Network, with the import that farmers, consumers and all the people eating rice should protect our agriculture and are starting activities within the framework.

### - WTO Negotiations

WTO negotiations will be continuing and have been completed by 2004. Korea has the basic goal to achieve during those WTO negotiations, which is to be granted the status of a developing country, together with other aims such as protection of Korea's agriculture and food sovereignty, while the anti-WTO movement is represented by a counter movement against the opening of rice import. This is because rice is the principal food in Korea and has importance in terms of food sovereignty.

Also, since 6.15 Joint Declaration announced by South and North Korean high ranking officials in 2000, the mood favorable for unification is now being heightened more than ever. Given Korea's specific situation, South Korea has a task to also produce the food to be consumed in North Korea. Especially, food sovereignty in the unified country would play a more important role than now.

- Preparation for the counter movement against WTO and the opening of rice import

Korean Women Farmers Association (KWFA) has performed a propaganda fare to oppose WTO and the opening of rice import four times this year, which occurred simultaneously in various cities and counties. Each of cities and counties selected a way fitting its own level of activity for the propaganda fare at markets and is now proceeding with various activities including education.

We are making all efforts to get prepared for a farmers large-scale struggle, which 0.3 million, a fourth of the agricultural population (4 million) will gather for. As reflected in the title of the struggle is Anti-WTO and No opening of rice import! No Korea-Chile Free Trade Agreement! . Korea is now full of fever against WTO and the opening of rice import.

National and Democratic groups in Korea have their own special committee of anti-WTO, defending food sovereignty and securing labor basic rights and are seeking women s role through Women s Action Group for the Protection of Our Rice inside the special committee.

- Counter movement against WTO by women (consumers, mothers) and all the people

We are suggesting a campaign of collecting 10 million signatures (1/4 of the Korea population) in order for the whole population to share the antagonism against WTO and the opening of rice import at its high pitch among Korean farmers. We maintain that the role of women who are housewives responsible for meals and consumers is very important and have plans to actively display 10 million people signature-collecting campaign with other women s groups.

Women s Action Group for the Protection of Our Rice consists of Action Groups of Women Farmers, Households and Women Students, having proceeded with press interviews of women groups network, women s activities in rural communities, propaganda fares and signature-collecting campaigns. Each action group is actively performing the education of the importance of rice in terms of food sovereignty and 10 million people signature-collecting campaign is going to be through 2003 and 2004, starting this year. Finally, WTO and opening import of rice will be blocked by the whole population.