Positive actions for promoting women physicists in Korea

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We review the recent activities of Women in Physics Committee (WIP) of the Korean Physical Society in networking and communication.

We have held the special session for women physicists in annual meetings of the Korean physical society (KPS), twice a year since 2005. This session is composed of two parts, one by a newly employed woman scientist on her career path and endeavors paid to get a permanent job, and the other by an experienced woman researcher on the government policies or the funding programs designed for young woman physicists. After lectures, we usually have round table discussion or free talk for networking. There are about 50 participants in average, including some male physicists. Opinions from male participants help us to understand each other. Also the president of KPS usually attends this session to hear the voice of woman physicist.

Beginning in 2011, 3 or 4 members of WIP Committee visit the physics department with no female faculty and have an unofficial meeting with female undergraduate and graduate students. Here they discuss about their career path and their problems encountered in everyday life as minorities. Students find their own solutions while they share the experiences and obtain the role model through this event, which they cannot easily get nearby. So far we have been visiting two universities a year but now we will increase number of visiting universities due to overgrowing demands.

Finally we report the amendment of the Act on Fostering and Supporting Women Scientists and Engineers such that government supports for women scientists to re-enter the workforce after career break due to pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing, which was passed in April 2012 in the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea. With a strong support from the legislature, there was a meaningful improvement of the evaluation process for women employees to receive compensation for the periods for pregnancy and child-birth.