

## Housing Policy Proposal to Respond to Surge in Single-person Households

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### Summary

#### 1. Growth pattern of and outlook for single-person households

- Over the past 30 years, the number of households with three to four members has dipped while that of a single person has surged. As a result, family size is growing smaller (one or two members) from the previous standard of two parents and children.

- Proportion of single-person households: 6.9 percent in 1985    27.2 percent in 2015    36.3 percent in 2045 (expected)

- The explosive growth of single-person households is a global phenomenon. The proportion of single-person households worldwide is 30.6 percent and will likely reach 40 percent.

- The surge in single-person households is attributed to urbanization, stronger desire for private life, individualism, higher education levels of women, growth of gender equality, and greater number of elderly households due to the rapidly aging population.

#### 2. Socioeconomic characteristics of single-person households and implications

- (Economic characteristics) Lower education and income levels and poorer job security than multi-member households

- (Social characteristics)) The number of single-person households has surged along with changes to societal mores about the family and marriage. Single-person households also suffer from social problems such as “lone deaths.”

### 3. Characteristics of housing for single-person households and policy support

- Single-person households mainly live in homes with a monthly lease that requires a large key money deposit. They also tend to live in detached homes rather than apartments, with lower housing security.

- Young adults want a loan program to afford jeonse homes; the middle-aged population financing to buy homes; older Koreans public housing; and senior citizens housing support services.

- The central and local governments have measures to support housing for single-person households, but most such assistance is for the elderly and young adults. Middle-aged and older Koreans are thus in the “blind spot” of support coverage.

## Policy implications

- ① Policy principles should be based on the main areas for housing policy suggested by UN HABITAT: Integrity, inclusiveness, affordable housing, standards for adequate housing, and support for moving to better homes
- ② User-tailored policy support should consider the socioeconomic characteristics of single-person households and their dwelling conditions.
- ③ (Inclusiveness) Attract single-person households as the main target for housing support. ④ (Integrity) Reshuffle and comprehensively review the central government's legal and institutional systems to support single-person households.
- ⑤ (Affordability) Provide affordable housing based on single-person households' spending on housing.
- ⑥ (Adequacy) Set proper housing standards considering the growing number of single-person households.