Statement by H.E. Ambassador Joon OH

First Committee of the General Assembly
Introducing draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.11 on the Report of the
Disarmament Commission

23 October 2006
New York

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Distinguished Delegates,

1. As the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 2006 session, and on behalf of the co-sponsors, who are the members of the expanded Bureau of the Commission, it is my pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.11, entitled “Report of the Disarmament Commission”.

2. This draft is a result of open-ended informal consultations among the Member States. It has been prepared in a manner similar to that of previous resolutions regarding the Disarmament Commission, with appropriate changes in the text as circumstances warrant.

3. The resolution, in addition to the organizational elements which are basically unchanged from the last year, contains recommendations on additional measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission’s methods of work, which were agreed by consensus at the 2006 substantive session.

4. Based on my consultations, the UNDC Bureau has decided to propose 9 to 27 April as the dates for the 2007 session of the Commission. These dates take into consideration other multilateral disarmament events scheduled for the next year as well.

6. As in previous years, the report consists of four chapters containing the results of the deliberations on the agenda items during the 2006 substantive session. The first three chapters include the introduction, the organizational section and the list of documents. Chapter IV, “Conclusions and recommendations”, covers the two consensus reports of the Working Groups, one on agenda item 4, entitled “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”, and the other on agenda item 5, on “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.” The Chapter IV also includes the recommendations on additional measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission’s methods of work which was agreed by consensus.

7. The Disarmament Commission organized its 2006 session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, the guidelines established by the reform programme entitled “Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission”, which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in 1990, and decision 52/492, adopted at the resumed session of the First Committee in 1998 under the agenda item on the rationalization of the work of the Disarmament Commission.

8. In the course of last year’s organizational session, the Commission agreed on two agenda items, namely “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons” and “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.” In addition to that, the Commission also decided that the issue of “Measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission’s methods of work” be considered in plenary meetings at its 2006 substantive session, with equitable time allocated to it.

9. Accordingly, the Commission held a three-week substantive session in 2006 from 10 to 28 April. At this session, the UNDC concluded the consideration of the issue of “Measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission’s methods of work,” and considered the two substantive items on nuclear disarmament and conventional weapons as the first segment of its three-year cycle.

10. In the course of seven meetings devoted to general discussion within the framework of Working Group I, delegations made comments on a wide variety of nuclear disarmament and related international security issues, expressed their concerns over emerging trends and presented concrete ideas and proposals. As a result, the Chairman of the Working Group I submitted two versions of his working paper, the second of which took into consideration written and oral submissions as well as comments by delegations on his first draft.
11. With regard to the Working Group II on "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms," Member States showed flexibility and were ready to work toward an agreement on this issue. The intellectually challenging and target-oriented deliberations were focused on the Chairman’s updated paper. This document was compiled on the basis of both the Chairman’s wide-ranging consultations with all Member States prior to the substantive session and of the discussion at the substantive session itself.

12. The Chairman’s working papers of both Working Groups are not attached to the report of the Commission, due to absence of agreement on whether they should be attach. Even though the Working Group Chairman’s papers are their sole responsibility and do not represent a negotiated position, I believe that they can serve a good basis for further consensus-building. I hope that the Chairman’s papers will allow the prompt beginning of the substantive discussion of these items at the forthcoming session, building on the positive elements of this year’s deliberations. It is also heartening to note that the Chairs of both Working Groups intend to continue their informal consultations with Member States during the inter-sessional period. I wish them success in this endeavour.

13. While I am pleased with the consensus adoption of additional measures for improving the methods of work of the Commission, it was somewhat disappointing that it was not possible to overcome the few remaining obstacles and to attach the two Chair’s texts. I hope that delegations will put to good use the progress and agreement achieved so far.

14. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and support as well as to the Bureau members and the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their valuable assistance.

15. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Chen and Under-Secretary-General Nobuaki Tanaka and their staffs as well as to the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, and his colleagues for the excellent service provided to the Commission.

16. Before concluding, allow me to remind delegations that the organizational session of the UNDC will be held in mid-November, and the Regional Groups are kindly requested to nominate their candidates for the Bureau as soon as possible. Electing the Bureau at least three months before the beginning of the substantive session is one of the agreements contained in the draft resolution before us, and I will do my best to ensure its implementation.

17. I hope that draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.11 will be adopted by consensus as was the case with similar resolutions in the past.

Thank you.