Statement by H.E. Ambassador PARK Hee-kwon
Deputy Permanent Representative
First Committee of the General Assembly
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Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

1. As many have already pointed out, the Chemical Weapons Convention has served the international community well as a primary multilateral instrument for the enhancement of international peace and security. My delegation welcomes the recent Statement adopted at the High-level Meeting on the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC, held a few weeks ago in this conference room. The anniversary was an occasion to highlight the remarkable achievements of that first decade: in only 10 years, membership of the Convention has reached 182 nations, encompassing 98 percent of humanity.

2. However, near-universality is not universality. There have been no significant developments in the status of those states that are not parties, and whose non-adherence to the Convention is a cause for serious concern. The uphill struggle to convince those countries of the merits and benefits of the Convention will require painstaking work. We need to deliver a strong message encouraging non-States Parties to join the rest of the world in the conviction that we can and must achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

3. Taking this opportunity, my delegation would like to stress the importance that the Republic of Korea attaches to the achievement of universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention. My Government has actively promoted universal adherence in various ways, providing recommendations on ensuring universality that were adopted at previous Conferences of States Parties.
Mr. Chairman,

4. A primary obligation under the Convention is the destruction of chemical weapons in an irreversible, verifiable and timely manner. For each State Party, steady progress towards the total elimination of chemical weapons and their means of production will be a demonstration of an unflinching dedication to reach the goal of the Convention. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the completion by Albania of the destruction of its chemical weapons. We commend the efforts and dedication of the Government of Albania in overcoming every challenge and difficulty to become the first possessor state to rid itself of chemical weapons. This is an exemplary achievement, and one that we hope will soon be matched by many more possessor states.

5. In the light of the looming danger of chemical terrorism, my delegation also highlights the importance of enhancing the effectiveness of chemical-industry verification. This verification can underpin and strengthen not only the Convention, but also the integrity and viability of the global non-proliferation regime.

6. Scientific and technological developments in the chemical industry make it clear that serious risks could lie ahead. My delegation hopes that the upcoming Second Review Conference will provide an opportunity to assess and address the current challenges, laying a solid foundation for ensuring full implementation and enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention.

**Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**

Mr. Chairman,

7. Let me turn now to the Biological Weapons Convention. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters rightly pointed out in its recent report the importance of “tackling the issue of new weapons technology”, including biotechnology. We agree that advances in biotechnology and the life sciences, as well as their widespread availability, increase the risk that proliferators, state or non-state, might take advantage of loopholes associated with the inherent dual use of biological agents and toxins.

8. These developments require a multifaceted response within the multilateral regime. The Biological Weapons Convention remains the fundamental legal and normative foundation for our collective endeavour to prohibit and prevent the use of biological and bio-toxic weapons while ensuring the benefits of the peaceful uses of biotechnology. We believe that its Review Conferences are the right forum for taking stock of the implementation of the Convention.
Mr. Chairman,

9. The 6th Review Conference, in 2006, is considered generally to have met the objectives set for it and provided a solid basis for further strengthening the Convention. Although the States Parties failed to agree on an action plan for comprehensive implementation, a final declaration was adopted for the first time in 10 years. Furthermore, the States Parties agreed on a series of measures that would make the Convention more robust, including the establishment of an Implementation Support Unit (ISU), the continuation of the intersessional work programme, and the adoption of the universalization action plan. It is our belief that such decisions clearly demonstrate the willingness of the international community to step up the implementation of the Convention.

10. We would like to express our satisfaction that the ISU has accomplished most of its mandated tasks in just a few short months. Furthermore, the Meeting of Experts held last August has provided States Parties with a good opportunity to share their experiences and learn from others, especially on the national implementation of the Convention. It is our hope that the ISU will play an active role in promoting the universality and implementation of the Convention while further deepening the cooperation among States Parties.

11. My delegation cannot overemphasize the importance of national implementation as the key to faithful and universal compliance with the Convention. The enactment and effective enforcement of appropriate national legislative measures are the core obligations of the Convention. Essential elements include penal legislation and tightened national export controls on biological agents and associated dual-use technology and equipment.

12. I take this opportunity to reaffirm my Government’s unwavering commitment to the Convention. Last year the Republic of Korea enacted a new implementation law, the Act on the Prohibition of Chemical and Biological Weapons and the Control of the Production, Export, and Import of Specific Chemicals and Biological Agents. This new law is a revision of the Chemical Weapons Prohibition Act and is now fully operational, serving as a consolidated framework for various regulations already in place for the prohibition and control of biological weapons, agents, and toxins. The successful implementation of the Convention in the Republic of Korea has demonstrated that we can faithfully abide by the principles of the Convention without undermining the development of the biotechnology industry.

Thank you.