Statement by Mr. YOUN Jong Kwon
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the UN
Thematic Debate on Other WMDs
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Mr. Chair,

The commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons constitutes a solid foundation for international peace and security. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) have served as key instruments in international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. My delegation recognizes with satisfaction the important progress we have made in this area.

It is noteworthy that the CWC is nearing the achievement of complete universality with the 188 States Parties. In particular, the Republic of Korea welcomes the recent accession of Iraq to the Convention and its declaration of chemical weapons, which marked a step forward in achieving the objectives of the Convention. In this regard, my delegation wishes to call upon once again the countries remaining outside of the Convention to join the CWC sooner than later, as was reiterated in the Second Review Conference held in 2008.

The Republic of Korea would also like to acknowledge some of the remarkable achievements made to date, including the complete destruction of chemical weapons by some possessor states. While calling upon other possessor states to live up to their obligations under the Convention within the established timeframe, my delegation stresses that all States Parties should make joint efforts to step up towards the goal of a chemical weapons-free world. The Republic of Korea remains fully committed to the full implementation of the Convention and continued cooperation with States Parties.
Mr. Chair,

Let me now turn to the BTWC. With advances in biotechnology as well as its widespread availability, the threat posed by biological weapons is unique and requires innovative and multifaceted solutions. In this regard, the intersessional work program set at the 6th Review Conference in 2006 is pertinent and closely linked to the challenges posed by biological weapons to the international community. My delegation is also of a view that bioterrorism is an issue which warrants our watchful attention.

The 6th Review Conference provided us with a solid basis to strengthen the Convention. Additionally, the success of the two previous intersessional work programs since 2007 has well demonstrated the will of the international community to strengthen the implementation of the Convention, while providing States Parties with a valuable opportunity to share their experiences. The themes of this year’s intersessional discussions are very timely and pressing in view of the increasing outbreaks of infectious diseases, in particular the fear caused by the potential global impact of the influenza A(H1N1) strain. As infectious diseases do not respect territorial boundaries, cooperation and assistance in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and the containment of infectious diseases would benefit global health and ultimately the entire BWC norm.

Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea, since its accession to the Convention in 1987, has fully implemented the Convention, with the enactment of effective legislation and the establishment of a comprehensive national regulatory regime.

During the last Meeting of Experts, the Republic of Korea submitted a working paper titled “Activities and Views on International Cooperation and Assistance Promoting Capacity Building in the Field of Infectious Diseases.” This working paper summarizes some of the recent efforts made by the government of the Republic of Korea to assist developing countries in the field of infectious diseases, and also highlights some of the necessary actions the international community should take to improve the international health system for infectious disease management.

The Republic of Korea would like to reconfirm its unwavering commitment to the letter and spirit of the Convention to implement its obligations and duties. In closing, let me express my sincere wish that we will be able to carry forward the momentum created at the 6th Review Conference and subsequent intersessional work programs for further progress at the 7th Review Conference in 2011.

Thank you.