Statement

by

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to the United Nations

at

The Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference
of the Parties to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of the first Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. I am convinced that the first PrepCom will benefit from your extensive experience and diplomatic skills as it faces a difficult situation.

Mr. Chairman,

Two years ago, States Parties to the NPT achieved a remarkable success at the 2000 Review Conference with the adoption of the Final Document, which laid out a roadmap for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament. This achievement was not just born out of concern that the entire NPT regime would be discredited if we failed to adopt a consensus document over the course of 15 years. Rather, it was the result of the international community's shared decision to reaffirm that the NPT stands at the heart of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts in the 21st century.

This PrepCom has special meaning in two respects. First, this session will be the first opportunity to increase the effectiveness of a strengthened review process for the Treaty on the basis of the Final Document. As the Final Document sets agreed benchmarks, we should now be better able to take stock of where we stand. Second, since the Final Document explicitly states that the NPT review process should consider any developments affecting the operation and purpose of the Treaty, we believe this PrepCom should assess the implications of September 11 on the NPT process. Indeed, September 11 has brought to light a new security threat. In this new strategic context, nuclear arms control efforts should be continued with renewed commitment. In our view, this PrepCom should be a starting point for making the NPT regime more effective and resilient.

Mr. Chairman,

Recognizing the significance of this first PrepCom, my delegation believes that we should bear in mind the following guidelines.

First, States Parties to the Treaty should use this forum to exchange their views and concerns to the fullest extent possible. I will discuss our views
and concerns regarding major aspects of the Treaty in a few moments, but let me just say that, in our view, the present situation should be a source of concern. At the same time, we recognize that our assessment of the current situation needs to be balanced. Progress must not be ignored or underestimated, and we should take care to ensure that a pessimistic atmosphere does not prevail at this first PrepCom. In order for the 2005 Review Conference to be a success, it is important that we get off to a smooth and positive start.

Second, this PrepCom should demonstrate to the world its competence to meet new security challenges in the aftermath of September 11 by identifying the nature of challenges and ways and means to address them. Among other things, September 11 highlighted the need to address asymmetric threats. Such threats are unlikely to be deterred by traditional means of deterrence. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the leading role of the IAEA in strengthening the ‘Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials’ and putting forth a concrete plan of action to identify specific areas where we can strengthen global preparedness against nuclear terrorism. The international community needs to take concrete steps to counter the proliferation of WMD, while building trust among nations through strengthened arms control, transparency and confidence-building efforts.

Third, reconfirming the significance of the NPT as a fundamental norm for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, this PrepCom should contribute to strengthening other multilateral instruments that uphold the NPT regime as a whole. It should also be a venue to build political will to make further progress in existing and future multilateral instruments. Doubtless, multilateral instruments serve as a trust bank to preserve and promote transparency and confidence-building measures.

Mr. Chairman,

Since nuclear weapon states made an unequivocal commitment to promote nuclear disarmament at the 2000 Review Conference, there have been heightened expectations for progress in this field. Naturally, non-nuclear weapon states have a legitimate interest in seeing this happen. By these elevated standards, the current pace of nuclear disarmament may fall short of satisfaction. In this regard, the thirteen disarmament measures contained in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference have yet to be implemented. As nuclear disarmament is the product of a dynamic process,
largely affected by the strategic relationships among nuclear weapon states, we should pay due attention to the ongoing nuclear disarmament efforts.

In this context, we welcome the Joint Statement by the Presidents of the US and the Russian Federation, affirming a new relationship between the two countries for the 21st century. We further welcome the intention of the US and the Russian Federation to formalize an agreement on the reduction of nuclear weapons in the coming months. It is our hope that the agreement will serve as an important boost for future disarmament processes.

My delegation believes that, in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, nuclear-weapon states should more vigorously pursue systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In this process, transparency by the nuclear weapon states with regard to the nuclear weapons capabilities and the implementation of relevant agreements should be increased.

Mr. Chairman,

As I stated earlier, the current situation warrants our concern, and the future of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) stands at the top of our list of concerns. Indeed, it is distressing that the Treaty has yet to come into effect five years after it was opened for signature. Under the circumstances, we welcome the adoption of the final declaration at the Second Conference on Facilitating the Entry Into Force of the Treaty, which affirms that the conducting of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion constitutes a serious threat to global efforts towards nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

Although the prospects for the early entry into force of the Treaty may not be bright at this stage, failure by another state should not serve as an excuse for any government to withhold its signature and ratification. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is vital that the moratorium on nuclear testing be maintained. Since a ban on testing constitutes a minimum commitment to nuclear non-proliferation on the part of the nuclear weapon states and an essential step towards nuclear disarmament, any future testing could put the entire NPT regime in jeopardy. It is therefore the duty of signatories and ratifiers to push ahead with the establishment of the verification regime of the Treaty upon its entry into force, and to provide the
necessary political, financial and technical support to ensure its full implementation.

Another important task for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. It is disturbing that, despite the fact that the Principles and Objectives agreed upon at the 1995 NPT Review Conference identified the Treaty as an important measure, and despite an agreed negotiating mandate, the negotiation has yet to commence. My delegation hopes that Member States of the CD will agree on a Programme of Work and then start negotiations on the FMCT without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

Universal adherence to and full compliance with the NPT are the most important parameters to measure the success of the Treaty. The significance and urgency of universality have been amply demonstrated by heightened concern about unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and materials when tensions ran high in South Asia and the Middle East. On every occasion, NPT States Parties should make it clear that no state other than the current five can be recognized as a nuclear weapon state. At the same time, this PrepCom should send a strong and clear message to the states concerned to implement Security Council resolution 1172 and the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference.

Unfortunately, from past experiences, we are well aware that adherence to the NPT does not by itself guarantee full compliance with the Treaty obligations. In this regard, the non-compliance of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea with its safeguards obligations under the Treaty has been a matter of continuing concern for the international community, especially from the standpoint of its implications for the integrity and credibility of the NPT.

The 1994 United States-DPRK Agreed Framework is in place as a supplement to, but not as a substitute for, the NPT in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Under the Agreed Framework, North Korea has maintained a freeze on its graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities and should come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA before the delivery of the key nuclear components for the light water reactor project by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. Given the IAEA assessment that it will take at least three years to verify North
Korea’s full compliance, and the fact that the scheduled delivery of key nuclear components is about three years away, we look forward to Pyongyang’s prompt cooperation with the Agency’s verification so that the LWR project can proceed without delay.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation firmly believes that, since its inception, the NPT has played a pivotal role in countering nuclear proliferation. Its invaluable and irreplaceable contribution will be even more important in the future. One of the most immediate challenges to the NPT regime will be non-compliance. In this regard, ongoing efforts to strengthen the IAEA safeguards system should be fully supported by all of us. Among other things, the universalization of the additional protocol should be a key priority. At the same time, my delegation welcomes the progress made on the IAEA’s integrated safeguards system, which is expected to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the current system.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to stress once again that the purpose of this forum is twofold – to reaffirm each and every State Parties’ unreserved commitment to the Treaty obligations and, at the same time, to strengthen the instruments under the NPT regime to meet new challenges. I can assure you that the Republic of Korea is prepared to do its part in this effort.

Thank you.