Statement

by

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at

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to extend our congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the second Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. I am certain that your diplomatic skill and stewardship will be a great asset to the Committee as it takes up its challenging tasks in preparation for the 2005 Review Conference.

My delegation would further like to take this opportunity to welcome Cuba as a new State Party to the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

For the past three decades the NPT has served as the essential foundation for the pursuit of disarmament and as the lynchpin of the global non-proliferation regime. The NPT has shown remarkable resilience throughout the variety of challenges it has faced. At the dawn of the new millennium, States Parties to the NPT reaffirmed their strong commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament for the 21st century with the adoption of the Final Document at the 2000 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

At the First PrepCom, States Parties were able to identify not only the new security challenges that had arisen in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks but also the ways and means to address them. Of these challenges, the most notable and relevant was the potentially catastrophic linkage between nuclear weapons and terrorism. My delegation is pleased to note the considerable progress that the international community has been able to make in this regard.

For its part, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has developed concrete measures to strengthen the safeguards system and to reinforce nuclear safety and security. As was noted in the 2000 Final Document, in paragraph 16 under Article III, IAEA safeguards need to be assessed and evaluated regularly. In this regard, my delegation continues to support the efforts of the IAEA to address these issues. Moreover, we welcome the progress that has been made in strengthening the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and Facilities. We believe that the Second PrepCom should support the IAEA’s efforts in this direction.

Indeed, addressing the threat of nuclear terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) requires a comprehensive strategy, one which incorporates robust efforts at the national, regional and global levels. In this context, it is encouraging
to note that the international community has strived to strengthen nuclear safety and security in order to prevent the illicit transfer of nuclear materials and technologies, particularly to non-state actors. My delegation views the G-8 Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction adopted at the G-8 Summit last year as a clear demonstration of the willingness of major States to curb the proliferation of WMD.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is of the view that the most pressing task facing the States Parties at this PrepCom is to explore the ways and means to prevent and to resolve the cases of non-compliance and nuclear proliferation. We firmly believe that the need to generate impetus for the strengthening of the verification and compliance mechanisms so as to prevent any further non-compliance cases in the non-proliferation regime has become more urgent than ever before.

Clearly the events that have unfolded since the First PrepCom demonstrate the need for strong political will within the international community. My delegation strongly believes that this PrepCom should not hesitate to undertake the difficult yet crucial task of reinforcing the effectiveness of our existing instruments and measures and of enhancing our ability to cope with violations of international agreements. In doing so, one of the primary goals will be the promotion of the universality of the Additional Protocol, the achievement of which will help ensure that the Agency is able to carry out its mandate in a more efficient manner. With the full implementation of the Additional Protocol, the IAEA would be able to provide increased assurance of both the non-diversion of declared materials and the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

The Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about the recent developments surrounding the North Korean nuclear issue. North Korea’s nuclear weapons program in breach of its international commitments, and its decision to withdraw from the NPT present a serious challenge to the global non-proliferation regime as well as a grave threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. The integrity and credibility of the NPT has also suffered an unprecedented blow. The future of the global non-proliferation regime based on the NPT hinges on how such a challenge is dealt with.

The international community should stand together in containing the specter of nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula. To this end, we see no substitute for a prompt, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. In achieving this goal, it is essential that North Korea retract its decision to withdraw from the NPT and comply fully with its safeguards obligations pursuant to the
NPT. North Korea must also abide by the South-North Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

My government reiterates its commitment to a peaceful resolution of this issue through diplomatic means. In this connection, we hope that the preliminary talks among some countries concerned which started last week in Beijing will lead to an expeditious resolution of the issue. The Republic of Korea will spare no effort to this end.

Mr. Chairman,

The unequivocal commitment to promote nuclear disarmament made by the nuclear-weapon states at the 2000 Review Conference raised the international community’s expectations for progress in this field. Non-nuclear-weapon states, as well as nuclear-weapon states, took the opportunity to reaffirm their shared interest in the disarmament process. However, in light of the elevated standards set in 2000, the current pace of nuclear disarmament has fallen short of our expectations.

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. Throughout this process, it is important for the nuclear-weapon states to enhance transparency and accountability with regard to their nuclear weapons capabilities and the fulfillment of their obligations under the relevant agreements. In this context, we would like to see the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation enter into effect at the earliest possible date. It is our hope that such progress in unilateral and bilateral nuclear disarmament will create a favorable atmosphere and generate momentum conducive to complete nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, my delegation is of the view that one of the practical ways to promote and encourage the implementation of the 2000 Final Document would be to hold a constructive discussion on the issue of national reporting called for therein. The Republic of Korea has submitted its report and looks forward to an interactive dialogue on this subject among the States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our firm belief that the strengthening and preservation of the integrity of the NPT as a fundamental norm cannot be achieved without strengthening the multilateral instruments that uphold and supplement the NPT regime as a whole.
In this regard, my delegation expresses its concern for the future of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Indeed, it is distressing that over seven years after it was opened for signature, the Treaty has yet to come into effect. With resolute support for the early entry into force of the Treaty, we continue to call upon all States Parties that have not yet done so, particularly those States whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty, to sign and ratify it without further delay. One State's failure to sign or ratify should certainly not serve as an excuse for any other Government to withhold its signature and ratification. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is vital that all existing moratoria on nuclear testing be maintained. Furthermore, in the meantime, it is the duty of the current signatories and ratifiers of the Treaty to provide the political, financial and technical support necessary to ensure the full implementation of the verification regime of the Treaty upon its entry into force.

Another task my delegation deems urgent in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. While a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) was identified as an important measure in the Principles and Objectives of the 1995 NPT Review Conference and a mandate to launch the negotiation was approved in 1995 and 1998, actual negotiations have yet to commence on the development of such a Treaty. Much of this delay has been attributed to the inability of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to reach a consensus on a programme of work for the sixth consecutive year. My delegation sincerely hopes that the CD will break this impasse and embark on negotiations on the FMCT without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

As a central pillar of the global non-proliferation regime, the NPT deserves the wholehearted support and universal accession of the entire international community. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that the NPT only sets out the minimum norms and standards acceptable to all States Parties. This means that the NPT is not a panacea for all levels of proliferation concerns wherever they arise. In some corners of the globe, the NPT system alone may not be sufficient to achieve its intended objectives. That is why we attach great importance to the roles of regional nuclear-weapon-free-zones, bilateral non-proliferation arrangements as well as export control regimes, which supplement and reinforce the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

Before concluding, my delegation would like to underscore the mutually reinforcing relationship between disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We consider the tendency to separate and isolate the interrelated goals of non-proliferation and disarmament a precarious and unproductive pursuit. On the contrary, my delegation
views non-proliferation as an essential means of ensuring the common security benefits that could be achieved through the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

Reaffirming our firm belief in the invaluable and irreplaceable contributions of the NPT, I can assure you that the Republic of Korea looks forward to participating in the upcoming discussions in an active and constructive manner.

Thank you.