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Statement

by

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to the United Nations

on

Cluster 1 Issues

at

the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties

to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons

30 April 2004
New York
Mr. Chairman,

The three pillars of the NPT, namely, non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, represent a delicate balance of the rights and obligations between Non-Nuclear Weapon States and Nuclear Weapon States. The loss of this balance can jeopardize the whole edifice of the NPT. The non-proliferation obligations of the Non-Nuclear Weapon States are predicated on the disarmament obligations of the Nuclear Weapon States. They are to move forward hand in hand in a mutually-reinforcing manner. The future of the NPT hinges on nothing less than the full and unequivocal commitment of all States Parties to both the non-proliferation and disarmament obligations of the Treaty. The Nuclear Weapon States will attain the necessary moral authority and political legitimacy to deal more resolutely with current and future proliferation challenges when they fulfill their end of the bargain through progressive and systematic disarmament efforts.

The ultimate goal of the NPT is to create a world free of nuclear weapons. Non-proliferation and disarmament are the bottom line in achieving this goal. While the Treaty’s strengthened compliance and verification mechanisms are central to the integrity and credibility of the NPT, they have proven insufficient in stopping determined proliferators. The recent disclosure of a sophisticated and vast nuclear black market has highlighted the importance of national and internationally coordinated export controls on sensitive technologies and items. Furthermore, the global non-proliferation regime should be supplemented by the establishment and expansion of nuclear weapon-free zones wherever practicable and a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing and production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, it must be assumed that potential proliferators will also become smart enough to fool an isolated non-proliferation regime. Therefore, the political will of States Parties to respect not only the letter but also the spirit of the NPT is indispensable. It is also important to convince potential proliferators that the acquisition of nuclear weapons does not serve, but rather undermines their national security interests. Libya’s bold decision to voluntarily relinquish its WMD programs provides a useful lesson from which to draw upon in this regard.
Moreover, it is essential to address the root causes of proliferation as well. Given that regional instability and security deficits can serve as convenient excuses for proliferators to justify their nuclear ambitions, it is essential to create a stable international and regional security environment conducive to non-proliferation. Against this backdrop, we see merit in the provision of negative security assurances by the Nuclear Weapon States. NSAs can reduce the perception of threat from the Nuclear Weapon States and incentives for proliferation.

The Republic of Korea believes that only those Non-Nuclear Weapon States Parties complying fully with their obligations under the NPT have a legitimate right to credible and reliable negative security assurances (NSA) from the Nuclear Weapon States. We share the view that this Preparatory Committee should include recommendations on this issue to the 2005 Review Conference.

The Republic of Korea attaches great value to achieving the universality of the NPT. We reiterate our call to the three countries remaining outside the NPT to accede to the Treaty as Non-Nuclear Weapon States as soon as possible. We also urge North Korea to rejoin its announcement of withdrawal from the Treaty.