Statement by
H.E. Mr. CHANG, Dong-hee
Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament
Republic of Korea

At
The First Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the
Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

8 May 2007, Vienna

Cluster I: Nuclear Disarmament

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament holds vital importance as one of the three pillars of the NPT. This extraordinary Treaty has been effective in reducing the threat of nuclear weapons through a grand yet delicate bargain between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, given the wide gap of perceptions between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, it would be hard to maintain that nuclear disarmament has been as successful as we had hoped.

This is not to undervalue the significance of the progress that has been made thus far. The 2000 NPT Review Conference welcomed the “significant progress achieved in nuclear weapons reductions” made under the START process. The Moscow Treaty was a further achievement that reflected the continued commitment of NWS to nuclear disarmament.

However, an estimated 27,000 nuclear weapons still exist in the world. In order to rekindle the global effort for nuclear disarmament, what we now need is to restore trust and nurture a spirit of cooperation between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS). While NNWS faithfully observe their commitment to non-proliferation, NWS must do their part by making real progress on nuclear disarmament. My delegation therefore calls upon all NWS to implement Article VI in good faith by complying with the decision on “Principles and Objectives” adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and carrying out the
13 practical steps contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. It is to be reminded that these are the interpretation by States Parties of what is meant by Article VI.

Mr. Chairman,

We take note of the recent announcements by a couple of NWS about plans to replace or modernize their nuclear arsenals. Such steps might, we are afraid, trigger a new type of nuclear arms race among the NWS.

We encourage NWS to take practical steps for deeper cuts in nuclear weapons as well as reductions in their deployment and operational status. At the same time, the NWS should marginalize and devalue the role of nuclear weapons in their security policies. In addition, the NWS are encouraged to report disarmament progress to the international community on a regular basis, preferably at each stage of any review cycle.

As more than half of existing nuclear weapons are possessed by the United States and the Russian Federation, my delegation would welcome any concrete progress in the talks between them as a follow-up to the START I Treaty which expires in 2009. We urge them to fully implement their bilateral commitments under the Moscow Treaty to further reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. In the process of disarmament the principle of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability should be faithfully observed.

Mr. Chairman,

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) are two essential building blocks to complement and strengthen the NPT regime. They would indeed represent significant steps forward as they would place qualitative and quantitative caps on the further expansion of nuclear arsenals.

An early entry into force of the CTBT is essential for the eventual total elimination of nuclear arsenals. By prohibiting testing, the CTBT can curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons, both vertically and horizontally. It has already been eleven years since the CTBT was opened for signature; yet the prospects for the Treaty’s entry into force in the near future still seem bleak. In this regard, my delegation strongly calls upon those states that have yet to ratify the Treaty, in particular those remaining 10 Annex II States to do so without further delay.
The negotiation of an FMCT is indeed the next logical step to the CTBT, not only for nuclear non-proliferation, but also for nuclear disarmament. My delegation believes that time is ripe for negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The Republic of Korea attaches high priority to launching negotiations on an FMCT at the earliest possible date.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes and supports the draft proposal made by this year's six CD Presidents on the substantive work of the CD. My delegation calls upon all CD Members to show maximum flexibility and creativity for the adoption of the Presidential Draft Decision as proposed so that negotiations on an FMCT can begin in the second part of this year's session.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset of a new NPT review cycle, we need to confirm and renew our determination to achieve the objectives of the NPT – nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We have before us the task to reverse the recent disappointments and ongoing deadlock in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation machineries. It is time for the States Parties to exercise their political will to move forward.

Thank you.