2010 NPT Review Conference
Main Committee III
Statement by Mr. PARK Chul-min
Counsellor
11 May, 2010
New York

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to join the previous speakers in offering our congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Main Committee III. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation as you carry out your valuable work.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to Article IV of the NPT, which enumerates the right of State Parties to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is critical to ensure the viability, credibility, and durability of the NPT and a key to maintaining the delicate balance between three pillars of the Treaty.

The Republic of Korea has a noteworthy experience in developing peaceful nuclear program. Since its first nuclear power plant began operation in 1978, nuclear power has fueled Korea’s economic development and has become an indispensable part of its energy infrastructure. Now as a major nuclear power generator operating 20 nuclear power plants that supply over a third of its total electricity needs, we are setting an ambitious target for the future. By 2030 nuclear power is expected to provide 59 percent of our electricity supply with the number of power plants in operation nearly doubled. Currently, 8 new reactors are under construction in Korea with an additional 10 units in the planning stage. The Republic of Korea also joined the ranks of nuclear reactor supplier states at the end of last year.

As a full beneficiary of the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy of the NPT, the Republic of Korea is committed to sharing its experiences and capabilities in this field in accordance with the principles and obligations of the NPT. Acknowledging the essential role that the IAEA plays in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the importance of ensuring that the IAEA
Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) has appropriate resources at its disposal to this end, the Republic of Korea will continue to support the Agency’s activities in assisting new comer countries in areas such as building nuclear power infrastructure and developing human resources. In particular, drawing upon the experience and expertise that we have gained by operating nuclear power plants for over thirty years, without accident, and in accordance with IAEA safety standards, we will contribute to the IAEA’s efforts to continue to establish a culture of nuclear safety and safe operation of nuclear reactors in those countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Korea’s support for research and development aimed at expanding nuclear energy in a safe and secure manner is inextricably linked to the maintenance of the highest standards of non-proliferation, safety, and security. Access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy pursuant to Article IV of the NPT will hinge on the observance of the treaty’s non-proliferation and safeguards obligations and the development of safe, secure, and proliferation-resistant nuclear energy programs. To this end, the Republic of Korea has been actively participating in relevant international collaborative efforts such as the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO), the Generation IV International Forum (GIF), and the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP).

Addressing the issue of security of supply will help maintain confidence in the NPT as we transition into the age of a Nuclear Renaissance. My delegation takes note of the various proposals on multilateral fuel-supply assurance schemes that have been put forward to the IAEA Board of Governors over the past years.

The Republic of Korea contributed to the discussion by submitting a working paper titled “Multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle” to the NPT PrepCom last year. We welcome the recent signing of an agreement between the IAEA and Russian Government to establish a LEU reserve in Angarsk. The Russian proposal will be a test case of our efforts to further assure reliable access to nuclear fuel.

My delegation believes that due consideration should also be given to the back end of the full fuel cycle, including waste management, and we look forward to further discussions in this regard.

Given the profound implications of the outcome of this Review Conference for international peace, security and prosperity, the Republic of Korea hopes that participants will engage in substantive discussions on promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in conjunction with equally important non-proliferation and disarmament obligations. We believe that the expanded uses of nuclear energy warrant serious consideration by the States Parties in taking steps to
further promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In reaffirming the basic principles and commitments of the NPT, we hope to strengthen the credibility and durability of the NPT regime in the years to come.

Mr. Chairman,

Keeping Article X of the NPT from being abused by proliferators is an equally important issue, which calls for our high consideration. Though the right of State Parties to withdrawal, as embedded in Article X, should be respected, my delegation believes that a withdrawal from the Treaty not only severely undermines the validity of the Treaty, but is also counter to the common efforts to achieve universality of the NPT. An abuse of Article X rights, especially when combined with Treaty violations, would be detrimental to the undiminished security of all. The DPRK’s announcement of withdrawal, combined with its blatant violation of the NPT, is the clearest example of such abuses.

In this regard, first, the Republic of Korea reiterates the importance of reaching a common understanding by State Parties that an effective response mechanism to address this issue is essential. Second, the right of withdrawal should be exercised in conformity with the NPT, strictly observing the procedural requirements. Third, a State will be responsible for its Treaty violations committed prior to its withdrawal, and lastly, an application of a fallback safeguard system should be reflected.

Considering the grave implications that an abuse of the right of withdrawal from the NPT may have to international peace and security and to the goal of universality of the NPT, we encourage the States Parties to undertake constructive and active deliberations to garner relevant outcomes on a collective response mechanism to a withdrawal from the NPT.

Thank you.