The 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Non-Proliferation
New York

<Check against Delivery>

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Since its historic inception in 1970, the NPT has been the cornerstone of the global nonproliferation system. State Parties have strived to follow through on their commitments, as engraved in the NPT, and to improve the effectiveness of the overall nonproliferation system. Through such common endeavors, the international community has so far safeguarded the security of all mankind from the danger of nuclear war and prevented the number of states possessing nuclear weapons from being doubled or tripled, as was once predicted.

However, our system is not perfect. The NPT regime is facing clear and alarming challenges, as well as emerging threats. Major noncompliance issues such as the North Korean nuclear issue still linger on. The treaty’s safeguards system, an essential verification and confidence building framework, needs to be strengthened. And nuclear terrorism has emerged as a new threat to the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

On an optimistic note, it is encouraging to witness a positive development on a long overdue noncompliance issue in the run up to this Conference. The Republic of Korea welcomes that the P5+1 and Iran agreed on parameters for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in
Lausanne and look forward to the conclusion of the JCPOA within the agreed time frame. We believe that a comprehensive resolution of the longstanding Iranian nuclear issue addressing all existing concerns will undoubtedly enhance the credibility of the nonproliferation system and contribute to the overall peace and security in the region and beyond. We also highlight the important role of the IAEA in clarifying all present and past unresolved issues, including PMD.

In contrast to the Iranian case, however, the North Korea nuclear issue remains a source of grave concern to the international community, as the DPRK continues to pursue its nuclear program and delivery system, in clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013), and 2094 (2013). North Korea exploited the NPT system only to develop a nuclear weapons program and now brazenly claims to be a nuclear weapon state after its announcement of the withdrawal from the NPT. The DPRK has also conducted three nuclear tests, including one in 2013 during this review cycle. These unprecedented actions are a direct affront to the very foundation of the global nonproliferation regime.

In this regard, the Republic of Korea strongly urges the DPRK to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, including its uranium enrichment program, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and immediately cease all related activities in accordance with its international obligations, including the aforementioned Security Council resolutions. On our end, we will continue working with relevant parties to resume a credible and meaningful dialogue focused on preventing the DPRK from advancing its nuclear capability further and ensuring substantive progress in its denuclearization. It is also important that the Conference sends a clear message to the DPRK that its blatant noncompliance can never be accepted as fait accompli and that it must abide by all international obligations, including the relevant Security Council resolutions and the NPT.

Moving onto our efforts to strengthen the safeguard system of the NPT regime, we want to highlight the importance of the universal application of the Additional Protocol (AP). Additional Protocol, along with IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, allows the IAEA to provide credible assurances not only on the non-diversion of declared materials and facilities but also on the absence
of undeclared materials and facilities. Together these two tools represent an accepted standard for verifying compliance. We are encouraged that 23 States have newly brought the Additional Protocols into force since the last Review Conference and also urge the States Parties that have yet to conclude or bring into force the Additional Protocol to do so now without delay.

While it will take some time before the merits of the Additional Protocol as a strengthened safeguards standard can be fully realized, the Republic of Korea appreciates that the IAEA is doing what it can within its existing authority to verify the correctness and completeness of state declarations under the comprehensive safeguards agreements. In this regard, we support introduction and application of the State-level Concept (SLC) for evaluating all safeguards-relevant information about a state as a whole in an effective and efficient manner.

In addition, we should not forget our important task to expand safeguards through the universalization of the NPT. The number of countries who remain outside the NPT is not high; however, the fact that some non-parties to the treaty maintain major nuclear weapons program does not allow us the luxury of ignoring them. This also reminds us of the need to finish our work on closing loopholes related to withdrawal from the NPT. We will appreciate detailed discussions on the specific issue of the withdrawal in the relevant subsidiary body session.

Last but not the least; possible nuclear proliferation by non-state actors and nuclear terrorism has emerged as one of the major contemporary challenges facing the NPT and to global security. In 2004, UNSCR 1540 was unanimously adopted to fill this gap in the existing nonproliferation system. Since then, the international community has continued to move ahead on this front, notably with a series of achievements made through the Nuclear Security Summit process. The Republic of Korea, as the Chair and host of the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, is actively playing its part in global efforts to combat nuclear terrorism. We will continue this effort based on a holistic approach that promotes synergy among nuclear security, nuclear disarmament, and nuclear nonproliferation, as presented by President Park Geun-hye at the Hague Nuclear Security Summit. Furthermore, the ROK plans to build upon its most recent experience as the chair of the UNSCR 1540 Committee to help achieve full implementation of the resolution.
Mr. Chair,

Along with the other two pillars, the nuclear nonproliferation commitments enshrined in the NPT have safeguarded the world from plunging into a nuclear catastrophe. The Conference this year provides the State Parties yet another timely opportunity to strengthen and enhance the delicate global security structure that was birthed by the treaty. The Republic of Korea is committed to working together with other State parties to move towards a safer and more peaceful world through the achievements realized at this Conference.

Thank you. /END/