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Statement

by

**H.E. Ambassador Kim Sam-hoon
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Korea
to the United Nations**

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**

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by extending my congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. I am confident that the Committee will benefit from your extensive experience and diplomatic skill as it undertakes the challenging tasks ahead. To this end, I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in carrying out the work of the Committee in preparation for the 2005 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

For more than three decades, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has served us well in curbing the spread of nuclear weapons. It remains irreplaceable as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Recently, there have been some encouraging developments on the front of nuclear nonproliferation such as Libya's decision to renounce its WMD programs and the countering of A.Q. Khan's procurement network. We welcome Libya's cooperation wholeheartedly and hope that it will set an example for the resolution of proliferation concerns in other parts of the world.

Nevertheless, such good news is overshadowed by the unprecedented challenges that the NPT faces today. Its integrity and credibility have suffered a serious blow as a result of recent cases of non-compliance and an announcement of withdrawal from the Treaty. These cases have revealed inherent limitations and loopholes in the Treaty which allow determined proliferators to pursue their nuclear ambitions without violating the Treaty.

The Treaty gives the right to States parties to acquire and operate a full range of fuel cycle activities, including uranium enrichment or the reprocessing of spent fuel, which can readily produce fissile material for nuclear weapons. This right can be abused by determined proliferators to develop their nuclear weapons capabilities under the guise of ostensibly peaceful nuclear energy programs. A State party has only to comply with the Treaty until it has acquired all the necessary materials and technologies to manufacture nuclear weapons and then withdraw from the Treaty before proceeding to build its nuclear arsenal. Such a loophole in the NPT could erode confidence in the nonproliferation commitments of some States parties and thus impede even legitimate cooperation with them for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The existence of an extensive clandestine international nuclear procurement network presents another daunting challenge to the global nonproliferation efforts. The thriving illicit trafficking of sensitive technologies and materials through such a network has demonstrated that the danger of nuclear weapons or fissile materials falling into the hands of terrorists can no longer be dismissed as a far-fetched nightmare.

In sum, the challenges confronting the NPT are dire enough to call into question the effectiveness and viability of the Treaty itself. They call for the concerted response of the international community as a whole. In this context, my delegation wishes to share the following observations.

First and foremost, the NPT must be supplemented and strengthened to fit the realities of the 21st century. In this regard, it is crucial that the IAEA's verification capabilities be strengthened through the universalisation of the Additional Protocol. On 19 February 2004, the Republic of Korea became the 39th country to ratify the Additional Protocol. We urge those States parties which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol as soon as possible. A bolstered universal verification regime will prove more effective in deterring and dealing with cases of non-compliance and will foster greater confidence in the compliance of States parties with their nonproliferation commitments under the Treaty.

The Republic of Korea also attaches great importance to export controls over technologies and items of proliferation significance as a practical way of complementing the existing loopholes of the NPT. In this connection, we support the leading role of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and establishment of a universal system of export controls. We recognize the need to control the transfer of sensitive fuel cycle technologies and items, particularly to countries of proliferation concern.

We welcome and support the Security Council's efforts to deal resolutely with the illicit trafficking of weapons of mass destruction and related materials involving non-state actors, noting that this issue has not been adequately addressed by the current non-proliferation regime. Beyond the Security Council's role under the NPT as the ultimate defender of compliance, it has responsibilities under the Charter to deal with specific proliferation concerns when they constitute a threat to the international peace and security.

We also believe that the withdrawal provision of the NPT should be revisited and complemented. While the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT cannot be overemphasized, the prevention of its “de-universalization” has now become a pressing task. In this connection, we are open-minded to constructive proposals, including the idea of requiring the Security Council’s approval for a withdrawal.

We further underscore the urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We 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 CTBT, to sign and ratify it without further delay. At the same time, pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is vital that all existing moratoria on nuclear testing be maintained. Placing a cap on future and existing stocks of fissile material for nuclear weapons through an FMCT, together with the ban on testing as provided for in the CTBT, will constitute an essential building block in achieving our nonproliferation and disarmament goals. We sincerely hope that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) will break its longstanding deadlock and begin negotiation of the treaty without further delay.

Furthermore, the Nuclear Weapon States have an obligation to more seriously take up their share of the bargain, namely, to fulfill the nuclear disarmament obligations under Article VI of the Treaty. We recall that the Nuclear Weapon States made an unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament in the form of the 13 practical steps at the 2000 Review Conference. While we welcome the entry into force of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (Moscow Treaty) between the United States and the Russian Federation in June 2003, we look forward to further substantial progress in nuclear disarmament. The Nuclear Weapon States will be able to advocate the merits of non-proliferation with stronger moral authority when they demonstrate greater vigor and resolve in fulfilling their nuclear disarmament obligations.

Finally, we emphasize the need to address the root causes of proliferation. The supply-side approach based on export controls will only have limited effectiveness until it is supplemented by a demand-side approach that reduces the incentive for nuclear proliferation. As a growing number of countries come to master the technologies to produce fissile materials and nuclear devices, the export controls and the safeguards system, however perfect

they are designed to be, can never be fool-proof in deterring determined proliferators. As incentive for proliferation often stems from the perception of insecurity, we attach great importance to the reduction of regional tension and the fostering of a peaceful global security environment. We also believe that negative security assurance should be granted to those States Parties complying fully with their obligations under the Treaty. We recognize the utility of providing individual security assurances and other incentives to those States which voluntarily accept additional non-proliferation obligations beyond their commitments under the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, the North Korean nuclear weapons programs pose the most pressing and intractable proliferation concern for the international community. How this issue is dealt with will have enduring and far-reaching implications for the future of the global non-proliferation regime as well as for the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia and beyond. It is crucial that North Korea make a full commitment to the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all its nuclear programs. To this end, we are working closely with interested parties within the framework of the Six-Party Talks. We will spare no effort for a peaceful resolution of this issue and look forward to progress at the next round of the Six-Party Talks.

Mr. Chairman,

It is incumbent upon the NPT review process to restore the trust of States parties in the Treaty by addressing the mounting concerns about the continued viability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The ultimate challenge of this Prepcom is to prove the effectiveness and vitality of the process by producing a consensus report with recommendations for the 2005 Review Conference. We sincerely hope that our work will be guided by our collective political commitment and unified resolve to strengthen the NPT so as to deal more effectively and resolutely with the present and future challenges to the global non-proliferation regime.

Thank you.