



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Oh Joon

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Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference Third Session

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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to offer you my congratulations on your election as the Chairman of this session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. I am confident that your able leadership will guide us at this PrepCom and steer us towards our goal of agreeing on recommendations on both procedural and substantive matters. We particularly appreciate your sincere efforts to find common ground in the run-up to this meeting. The Republic of Korea is ready to work closely with you to achieve the best outcome. I also wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and High Representative Sergio Duarte for their devoted work in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to note that we are meeting today amidst rising expectations in the international community for progress in issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. For one thing, new visionary initiatives, such as the five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament introduced by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as the vision for “a world free of nuclear weapons” offered by US President Obama during his speech in Prague, have intensified the disarmament debate on a global scale.

It is also encouraging to see new policies in nuclear weapon states. We are heartened by the commitments of the US and Russian Presidents, as set out in their Joint Statement of April 1, to fulfill their

obligations under the NPT by concluding an agreement to succeed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I (START I) by the end of this year. Going one step further, President Obama suggested specific actions during his Prague speech to work towards a global nuclear zero target. We sincerely hope that these initiatives will produce concrete results at an early date.

However, while we hold greater hopes for the future, we must first resolutely confront the grave challenges facing the NPT regime today. The challenges are present in all of three pillars of the NPT. But the most serious ones are found in the area of non-proliferation, such as the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The DPRK nuclear issue raises a pressing, fundamental question of how the NPT can tackle threats to the foundation of nuclear non-proliferation. Presently, this issue has the risk of constituting the first case where nuclear weapons have been developed within the framework of the NPT.

As such, an early resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue is vital to ensuring the integrity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as to securing peace on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. Strenuous efforts have been made to achieve the verifiable denuclearization of the DPRK in a peaceful manner through the Six-Party Talks. However, it is extremely regrettable that despite these efforts, the DPRK carried out a rocket launch last month in direct contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 1718, and is further threatening "measures that will include nuclear tests and test-firing of intercontinental ballistic missiles." My Government takes this opportunity to urge the DPRK to fully comply with the obligations under the NPT as well as Resolution 1718, and implement the 2005 Joint Statement and subsequent agreements adopted at the Six-Party Talks.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation continues to hold a firm belief that strengthening the NPT-based regime is the most effective deterrent to the current pressing challenges that threaten it. The Treaty should be buttressed by various creative tools that have been developed so far. In this regard, I would like to highlight the following points to strengthen the NPT regime.

First, the nuclear safeguards regime with the IAEA at its center should be further reinforced. My delegation therefore endorses the necessity to universalize the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the Additional Protocol. We also emphasize the importance of robust international cooperation to prevent nuclear terrorism as shown by the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT).

Second, my delegation reiterates its firm conviction in the goal of nuclear disarmament in realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. To effectively pursue both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we share the view that the first order of business should be an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the commencement of negotiations for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty

(FMCT). In this respect, we welcome President Obama's recent call for CTBT ratification by the US Government. We urge those who have not yet ratified the Treaty, in particular the Annex 2 countries, to do so as soon as possible.

Third, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are of the view that this right is particularly instrumental in sustainable socio-economic development of developing countries. For my country, nuclear energy has been vital to our economic growth during the past decades, currently providing 40% of our electricity needs with the projection of an increase up to 60% by 2030. At the same time, we believe that there should be effective safeguards against the potential misuse of this right.

Fourth, my delegation recognizes the merit of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, as nuclear renaissance may enhance international concerns over nuclear proliferation. A guaranteed and sustainable supply of nuclear fuel through an international mechanism may discourage states in need of peaceful nuclear energy from pursuing their own uranium enrichment technology. In this regard, we believe that such an approach should be based on objective and fair criteria, and should not be implemented in a way that denies or limits the legitimate right for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It should also serve as a complement to, and back up of, the existing market. The Republic of Korea is willing to constructively participate in the discussions on this subject.

Last but not least, the misuse of Article X (withdrawal) has been the focus of States Parties' attention, following the DPRK's announcement of withdrawal from the Treaty. We believe that it is high time for States Parties to consider an effective and collective response mechanism to a withdrawal from the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, one important task ahead is mobilizing the political will necessary to strengthen the NPT regime. I believe that we should not waste the opportunity we have today with the positive developments in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation field. We need to remind ourselves that we should not repeat the failure of the 2005 Review Conference. The commitments to disarmament should turn into concrete actions promptly. All available mechanisms should be fully utilized both in and outside the UN system. The Republic of Korea will do its part to enable this session to lay solid groundwork for a successful 2010 Review Conference that is essential to furthering international peace and security.

Thank you.