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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 Meeting of the First Committee
of the 58th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

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New York**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the Chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that your able stewardship will be a great asset in guiding this year's discussion on disarmament and nonproliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

As always, the First Committee presents us with a unique forum for taking stock of what has transpired in the field of disarmament and nonproliferation over the past year. This year, it is more crucial than ever that we seize this opportunity to tackle the pressing threats emerging within our rapidly changing security environment. In order to make the work of the First Committee more effective and relevant, we must not shy away from the difficult tasks before us. In this regard, my delegation supports your initiative, Mr. Chairman, to hold consultations on First Committee working methods with a view to enhancing the efficiency of the Committee's work.

Mr. Chairman,

The global nuclear nonproliferation regime based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) currently faces unprecedented challenges to its credibility and integrity. At this critical juncture, the international community must renew its commitment to nuclear nonproliferation by devising a comprehensive strategy to better cope with the problems of noncompliance. Such a strategy should be designed to overcome any gaps and limitations inherent in the existing nuclear nonproliferation regime.

In this regard, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the IAEA's efforts to strengthen its safeguards system. The IAEA safeguards system plays a central role in fostering confidence in the compliance of States Parties to the NPT. It must, therefore, be equipped with the capability and mandate to deal more effectively with determined proliferators. We view the universalization of the Additional Protocol as a *sine qua non* to this end. For its part, the Government of the Republic of Korea will ratify the Protocol soon.

Recent events have proven that legalistic approaches alone, which are based on a 'one size fits all' model, are not adequate to address the increasingly complex cases of proliferation. If these emerging trends and new patterns cannot be deterred by conventional measures, we must develop more effective strategies to meet these challenges. In this regard, the Republic of Korea supports the recent G-8, EU and US-EU Summit joint statements and action plans, which underline

the need for a more active response to suspected cases of WMD proliferation and noncompliance.

Against this backdrop, we believe that countries with relevant WMD capabilities, as well as suppliers of relevant materials and equipment, should bear the "heightened responsibility of owners." Those countries with relevant capabilities must demonstrate a higher level of openness and transparency in their activities. These heightened standards would serve not only as a deterrent to noncompliance, but also as a means of promoting confidence among States.

Furthermore, an effective and rigorous enforcement of export controls is a key component of the nonproliferation infrastructure. All States must implement effective export controls on materials, equipment and technologies related to WMD, and enforce adequate safety and security measures thereon. Export control regimes, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), have played an essential role in establishing substantial barriers that help keep dangerous items from falling into the wrong hands, including those of terrorist organizations. Upon this strong conviction, the Government of the Republic of Korea hosted the Plenary Meeting of the NSG in Seoul in May 2003. Moreover, the Korean Government will host the MTCR Plenary Meeting in 2004.

Mr. Chairman,

The Korean Peninsula is once again haunted by the specter of nuclear proliferation. North Korea's nuclear weapons programme is not only the most pressing challenge to the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula, but also poses a grave threat to the peace and stability of the Northeast Asian region and beyond.

The Republic of Korea is strongly committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Accordingly, North Korea's nuclear weapons programme cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. Moreover, there is no substitute for North Korea's complete, irreversible and verifiable dismantlement of its nuclear weapons programme. North Korea has nothing to gain and everything to lose by pursuing its nuclear ambitions.

On the contrary, once North Korea abandons its nuclear programme, my Government will spare no effort in helping North Korea to overcome its economic difficulties and to join the mainstream of the international community.

The Republic of Korea will continue to work in close cooperation with those countries that also have vital stakes in a de-nuclearized Korean Peninsula in order to find a peaceful and diplomatic resolution to the North Korean nuclear

issue. The six-party talks, which began in Beijing last August, provide the best chance for a diplomatic solution to the problem. We urge North Korea to seize this opportunity for a peaceful resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

The objectives of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament cannot be achieved without strengthening the multilateral instruments that complement the NPT regime as a whole.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As a strong proponent of establishing an international norm against nuclear testing, the Republic of Korea participated in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty held in Vienna last month. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, all existing moratoria on nuclear testing must be maintained. The Republic of Korea continues to support the work of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO, particularly in its efforts to establish the Treaty's verification regime.

Another task we deem urgent in the field of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament is the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. It is regrettable that much of the delay in negotiating such a treaty has been attributed to the longstanding impasse at the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The FMCT will constitute not only a practical step toward nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, but also an effective means of combating nuclear terrorism by reducing the risk of loose nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands. Thus, we sincerely hope that the CD will break its deadlock and begin negotiations on the FMCT without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea supports the continued and steady progress toward nuclear disarmament as an integral part of the NPT. In this regard, we welcome the entry into force of the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions between the Russian Federation and the United States last June. We commend this agreement between the two largest nuclear powers as a significant step which will help bring about quantitative reductions through a practical step-by-step approach.

In the global context, we believe that the new strategic framework will have far-reaching positive impact on the international security landscape. We hope to

see it provide momentum for further agreements with enhanced transparency and accountability measures between other nuclear weapon states.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea is pleased to note the progress that has been made in the fields of chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles.

The First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) provided a useful forum for discussion on important issues such as an action plan on national implementation, the role of the CWC in the current security environment and achieving universality. As an active member of the Executive Council of the OPCW, we hope that the five-year work plan included in the Chairman's Text will provide the Organization with a useful roadmap as it carries out its daunting tasks in the coming year.

The experts meeting of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) offered an opportunity for useful discussion on two timely and relevant topics. One was the adoption of necessary national measures to implement the prohibitions set forth in the Convention, including the enactment of penal legislation, while the other was national mechanisms to maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic microorganisms and toxins. Considering that this was the first meeting since States Parties had agreed on the new process to strengthen the Convention, we believe that it provided momentum in the right direction. We hope to see the meeting of States Parties in November result in a number of specific recommendations within this field.

In light of the continuing proliferation of ballistic missiles, the Republic of Korea welcomes the positive outcome of the second Regular Meeting of Subscribing States to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC) last week. As a significant confidence building measure to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles, we hope that the HCOC will achieve universal adherence in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the past year, substantial progress has been made in the field of conventional arms. In particular, we would like to note the efforts to strengthen the CCW regime and to improve the effectiveness of the UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNRCA). The Republic of Korea continues to lend its full support to these efforts.