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Statement

by

**H.E. Ambassador CHUN Yung-woo
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Korea
to the United Nations**

at

**the Meeting of the First Committee
of the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. Chairman,

Congratulations on your appointment as Chairman of the First Committee. We look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in general and nuclear weapons in particular remains the gravest threat to global security today. The exposure of the A.Q. Khan proliferation network has awakened us to the real danger of WMD and their means of delivery falling into the wrong hands. In meeting this challenge, it is imperative to ensure universal adherence to and compliance with the existing disarmament and nonproliferation norms, including the NPT, the IAEA safeguards agreements and additional protocols, the CWC and the BWC. It is of critical importance to strengthen and supplement the existing nuclear nonproliferation regime based on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The inherent weaknesses and loopholes of the NPT must be remedied in order to prevent determined proliferators from developing nuclear weapons capabilities under the guise of ostensibly peaceful nuclear energy programs.

In this regard, the Republic of Korea recognizes the vital roles that the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the G-8 Global Partnership against Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction play in supplementing the global nonproliferation regime. We also welcome and support Security Council Resolution 1540 on Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction which was adopted in April of this year. We see Resolution 1540 as a meaningful step forward in closing the existing gaps in the international nonproliferation regime by addressing the serious concern about the danger of non-state actors gaining access to WMD and their means of delivery.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to strengthening the compliance and verification mechanisms of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. To this end, we strongly support the universalization of the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement. We became the 39th country to ratify the additional protocol in February 2004. In accordance with the new safeguards standards set forth by the additional protocol, we submitted a comprehensive new declaration to the IAEA on all our nuclear activities, including laboratory-scale scientific research experiments conducted in the past involving the most trivial amounts of nuclear material. We are cooperating fully with the IAEA to achieve the highest standards of nuclear transparency in our country. We urge all those States parties to the NPT that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the additional protocol as soon as possible.

The Republic of Korea underscores the urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is particularly important that those States whose ratification is a condition for its entry into force adhere to the treaty without further delay. The conclusion of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) with an appropriate verification mechanism is another task that is long overdue. Placing a cap on future and existing stocks of fissile material for nuclear weapons through an FMCT, together with the ban on nuclear testing set forth in the CTBT, will constitute indispensable building blocks in achieving our nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament goals. It is imperative to uphold moratoria on nuclear testing pending the entry into force of the CTBT. Moreover, until the FMCT enters into force, we urge all relevant States to declare and abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material used for nuclear weapons.

These normative efforts toward nonproliferation will work best when they are combined with efforts to address the underlying causes of proliferation through the resolution of regional conflicts and the easing of regional tensions and insecurity.

Mr. Chairman,

The NPT rests on a delicate balance between its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Maintaining this balance is vital to the political viability and practical vitality of the Treaty. As disarmament and nonproliferation are mutually complementary and reinforcing, the strengthened nonproliferation obligations of the non-nuclear weapon States should be matched by more earnest and good faith efforts by the nuclear weapon States toward complete nuclear disarmament. Nor should non-proliferation efforts be made at the expense of the legitimate right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We look forward to more in-depth debates on these fundamental issues in the NPT Review Conference in May of next year.

Mr. Chairman,

The North Korean nuclear issue remains a serious challenge to the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and beyond. The Republic of Korea reiterates its commitment to the peaceful resolution of this issue through the process of the Six-Party Talks. We look forward to North Korea's strategic decision to abandon all its nuclear weapons and related programs, including its uranium enrichment program, once and for all and join the mainstream of a thriving East Asia.

The Republic of Korea is actively engaged in the initiatives of the like-minded countries to control the proliferation of ballistic missiles as a means of delivery for WMD. We hosted the plenary meeting of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) last week in Seoul. We fully subscribe to the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) as a practical basis for building global norms on ballistic missile-related activities. It was a great disappointment that the second UN panel of Governmental Experts on the Issue of Missiles in all its Aspects failed to produce a substantive report despite three sessions of in-depth discussions this year.

The Republic of Korea supports the UN Programme of Action On Small Arms as an important multilateral response to a human security threat. It is encouraging to note that the first session of the open-ended working group on marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons had a promising start last June, and we look forward to substantive progress in future sessions. We support tightened control of MANPADs and welcome their inclusion in the UN Register on Conventional Arms as a new sub-category. We hope that this Committee will take concrete action on this issue in its current session.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea places great value on effective multilateralism in dealing with global disarmament and non-proliferation issues. And yet, the performance of the multilateral disarmament machineries has lately been rather disappointing. The Conference on Disarmament has been in limbo for too long, without the prospect of being revived anytime soon. The UNDC this year has failed to adopt an agenda as a basis for starting deliberations. The third Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on its agenda for the Review Conference next year, let alone reach consensus on substantive recommendations. Such a lamentable state of the major disarmament machineries and for a makes the role and responsibility of the First Committee all the more important. This, in turn, makes the reform of the First Committee an urgent priority. We support constructive proposals on the revitalization of the Committee and look forward to achieving a fruitful outcome.