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**Statement**

**by**

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of the Republic of Korea  
to the United Nations, Geneva**

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First Committee**

**Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons**

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Mr. Chairman,

This year will be recorded as one of the poorest harvests in the field of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. In addition to already ailing CD and UNDC, successive failures in NPT Review Conference of May and World Summit of September to produce a meaningful outcome have attested to the gaping differences in positions and perceptions, particularly surrounding the issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, among key players and a group of countries. The First Committee this year is convened in this juncture and we find thus far no ground to see the issues of nuclear weapons handled with less controversy than before. However, controversy does not necessarily lead to pessimism. Rather, my delegation is of the view that the international community is already saturated with a high level of common sense that we should be out of the quagmire sooner rather than later.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, the Republic of Korea welcomes the significant progress made thus far in reducing nuclear arsenals and the commitments to further reductions under the Moscow Treaty. Nevertheless, we expect further progress towards deeper cuts, taking note of the fact that the number of nuclear warheads in existing arsenals is roughly the same as when the NPT entered into force in 1970. Further agreements should be pursued to take the largest arsenals down to much lower levels and limit research and development intended to add new nuclear weapons to existing arsenals.

At the heart of the turmoil on nuclear disarmament lies the gap between the record of nuclear-weapon States and the expectations of non-nuclear-weapon States. The fact is that disarmament progress has not matched the rapidly rising expectations of the post-Cold War era. In this regard, we believe that efforts to reduce this gap will enhance the moral authority and political legitimacy of nuclear-weapon States in strengthening non-proliferation norms.

Mr. Chairman,

Reaffirming the urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we call upon all States that have not yet ratified the Treaty, particularly those 11 States whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, to do so without further delay. Meanwhile, pending the entry into force of the CTBT, it is imperative to maintain the moratorium on nuclear test explosions. Moreover, all States are strongly encouraged to continue their contributions to the early completion of the monitoring system of the CTBT.

As the next logical step in the wake of the adoption of the CTBT, we cannot overemphasize the importance of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), not only as a guarantor of nuclear non-proliferation, but also as a precursor to nuclear disarmament. In light of the urgency of commencing substantive discussions of the FMCT, my delegation is willing to start negotiations based on any reasonable formula that can garner the widespread support of CD Member States. There should be no further delay to opening negotiations.

In the meantime, considering the pressing need to curb the production of fissile materials, we encourage all States with nuclear-weapons capabilities to voluntarily declare moratoria on the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. Ideally, these States are also encouraged to place under the IAEA verification regime all fissile materials no longer needed for military purposes.

Furthermore, my delegation would welcome any reasonable initiative that would make the CD back to work. In this regard, we appreciate the new initiatives by some of this year's CD presidencies in introducing more serious and interactive discussions. This would be an interim measure that, I believe, could galvanize the Conference, creating an atmosphere conducive to its original mandate for active negotiation. I believe that the First Committee should support these constructive initiatives of CD presidencies to be continued next year in order not to leave the only negotiating body for multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation in perpetual disarray. As the Republic of Korea is

planned to assume the second presidency next year, it will spare no effort to revitalize the CD in tandem with close affiliation with other presidency States.

Mr. Chairman,

I would now like to briefly draw your attention to the outcome of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks, held in Beijing last month, at which the Six Parties succeeded in adopting a Joint Statement setting out the principles and guidelines for the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

First and foremost, we welcome the commitment by North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and return at an early date to the NPT and to IAEA safeguards. The Six Parties also reaffirmed that the goal of the Six-Party Talks is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner and agreed that the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula should be observed and implemented.

My delegation earnestly wishes that the Joint Statement will lead to substantial progress not only on the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, but also towards the realization of enduring peace on the Korean Peninsula and consolidation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

My government highly appreciates the endeavours by all the other parties, particularly by China, the host country of the Talks. The Korean government will continue to engage in diplomatic efforts for the eventual settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue and for achieving permanent peace on the Peninsula.

Mr. Chairman,

The pursuit of non-proliferation will work best when the causes of proliferation are adequately addressed. We should not overlook the fact that insecurity, real or perceived, is in many cases a key motive for the development of nuclear weapons capabilities. The international community must redouble its efforts to alleviate those security concerns that have prevented certain States from joining the NPT and caused others to pursue nuclear weapons capabilities clandestinely.

At the same time, we believe that nuclear-weapon States should provide strong and credible security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that faithfully meet their NPT and other safeguards obligations. We also recognize the value of providing enhanced security assurances and other incentives to those States that voluntarily accept additional non-proliferation commitments beyond the parameters of the NPT.

Thank you.