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PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Cheng Jingye
Head of the Chinese Delegation
at the General Debate of the 61st Session of
UNGA First Committee

New York, 2 October 2006

Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of this session of the UNGA First Committee. With your able leadership, you will surely guide this session of the Committee to a success. The Chinese delegation would like to assure you and other delegations of its full cooperation.

Madam Chairperson,

Since last session of the Committee, the international security situation has not been tranquil. Developments of international and regional situation are affected by frequent regional conflicts and complicated hotspot issues. However, peace, development and cooperation are still the common aspirations of the international community. During this important historical period in which opportunities and challenges go hand in hand, it is imperative for all States to foster a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. We should strive to build a harmonious world by upholding multilateralism and pursuing a win-win approach, where countries coexist in amity politically, conduct equal-footed and mutually beneficial cooperation economically, trust one another with close coordination on security matters, and complement each other culturally.

Madam Chairperson,

Since the beginning of this year, regional non-proliferation issues have been very prominent. The diplomatic process to resolve these issues has experienced twists and turns and is faced with great difficulty. At the same time, double standards and opportunism remain unabated and the

international non-proliferation regime is in danger of being further weakened.

In the current situation, it has become an important and urgent issue for the international community to strike a balance between non-proliferation on one hand and maintenance of regional peace and stability, the legitimate security concerns of countries involved and the rights to peaceful uses on the other hand. In this regard, China would like to put forward the following proposals:

Firstly, a comprehensive approach should be adopted in addressing both the symptoms and root causes of proliferation problems. No international non-proliferation efforts should deviate from the fundamental objective of maintaining and promoting regional and international peace and stability.

Secondly, parties concerned should commit themselves to normalization of their relationship through consultation on an equal footing and on the basis of mutual respect, which will greatly contribute to achieving non-proliferation goals and promoting peace and stability.

Thirdly, the approach of dialogue and negotiation should be further pursued. Resorting to sanctions or exerting pressure will not solve problems at the root. Instead, it may lead to escalation of crisis with negative effects in the end.

Fourthly, the impartiality and non-discriminatory nature of the international non-proliferation efforts should be ensured, and the relationship between non-proliferation and peaceful uses of science and technology should be properly managed in a balanced manner.

Fifthly, effective measures should be taken to safeguard international non-proliferation regime. The international community should, through widely participated discussion, advance with times, build up greater consensus, so as to consolidate and reinforce relevant multilateral mechanisms.

Madam Chairperson,

On the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, China is committed to maintaining peace and stability on the Peninsula, making the Peninsula free of nuclear weapons and promoting the Six-Party Talks. It has been proved that the Six-Party Talks remains an effective mechanism for enhancing understanding and trust and resolving the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue. We hope the parties concerned will work together to expand common ground, and meet each other half way in a cool-headed manner and with greater flexibility, with a view to the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks and gradual implementation of the Joint Statement. This is the only viable solution to the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, China supports the efforts to safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and is opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while standing for the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East and a peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic negotiations. While entitled to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, all states should honor their treaty obligations and commitments. The current top priority is to keep and advance the dialogue between Iran and the EU3, so as to resume talks at an early date. China hopes that the parties involved will show more flexibility, remain calm and patient, and stay committed to the right course of pursuing peaceful solution. This will create favorable conditions for bringing the Iranian nuclear issue back to the track of negotiation. China will continue to play a constructive role in this process.

Madam Chairperson,

Multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms are important components of current international security system. They play an essential role in maintaining world peace and

stability, and promoting the common development of all States. However, it is regrettable that, over the past year, multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process has been faced with great difficulty. Despite some progress, the work of relevant multilateral institutions is still in short of impetus on the whole.

Under new circumstances, it serves the common interests of all States to constantly promote the sound development of multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process, which is also the common responsibility of all States. China believes that the international community should focus its efforts on the following aspects:

Firstly, efforts should be dedicated to preserving global strategic stability and realizing the common security for all States, so as to remove the root cause of the danger to peace and stability. The role of nuclear weapons in national security should be reduced and the nuclear disarmament process should be constantly promoted. An international legal instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states should be negotiated and concluded at an early date. Preventive and effective measures should be taken to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space, and relevant international legal instrument should be negotiated and concluded, so as to ensure the peaceful use of the outer space.

Secondly, the international community should be committed to preserving and strengthening international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. Currently, it is imperative to enhance the authority, universality and effectiveness of such arms control and non-proliferation treaties as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, to promote the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and to take concrete measures to reinforce the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system.

Thirdly, the traditional multilateral arms control and disarmament

institutions should be revitalized. The Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission have always been important platforms for promoting multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts. Taking into account the new situation and new tasks, effective measures should be taken to move relevant institutions out of quagmires, make them reinvigorated and play their due roles. At the same time, it is important to stick to the principle of consensus, in order to guarantee the justness, rationality and universality of multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts.

Fourthly, the international community should pursue a people-oriented principle in striving to address the humanitarian problems in the field of arms control. The implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols should be further promoted, and the universality and effectiveness of the Convention and its Protocols should be enhanced. Although the Review Conference of the UN Program of Action (PoA) on small arms and light weapons this year failed to achieve substantive outcome, the PoA remains as a guiding document for international efforts to combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The comprehensive and effective implementation of PoA is still the urgent task of the international community.

Fifthly, the capacity building in combating new threats such as nuclear terrorism should be enhanced. The UN Security Council Resolution 1540 should be fully implemented in order to effectively prevent the weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists. Efforts should be made to promote the signing and ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and to implement the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities, with a view to properly countering the threats of nuclear terrorism.

Madam Chairperson,

As a constructor and vindicator of and participant in the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regime, China has always, in a highly responsible manner, taken concrete measures to support multilateralism and promote the cause of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a nuclear-weapon state, China has never evaded its due responsibilities and obligations in the nuclear disarmament. China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and refrained from any nuclear arms race, making contributions to international nuclear disarmament. China earnestly implements its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention, and has always been actively promoting international efforts to prevent weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. China attaches great importance to resolving humanitarian problems in the field of arms control, strictly abides by the provisions of Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, and supports and actively participates in the international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

China firmly opposes the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and actively participates in the international non-proliferation efforts. China has put in place a comprehensive legal and administrative system of non-proliferation export control, and has been constantly strengthening its law enforcement. China actively supports and participates in the work of the UN Security Council 1540 Committee. In July 2006, China successfully hosted an international workshop on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 in the Asia-Pacific region, in cooperation with the UN DDA, EU and the Australian, Denmark, Norway and UK governments.

From 25th to 28th September, China hosted a study visit for the UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament for the first time, which fully

demonstrates China's support to the work of the UN and multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Madam Chairperson,

China firmly pursues a road of peaceful development. It has always integrated its own development with the common progress of the mankind, making its own development both the end and means for maintaining world peace. Proceeding from this basic national policy, China will continue to extensively and deeply participate in and promote international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process in an active manner, move forward hand in hand with peoples all over the world to make unremitting efforts to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.