



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by Ambassador Y.J. Choi
Permanent Representative
First Committee of the General Assembly
General Debate
4 October 2006
New York

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Madam Chair,

1. My delegation wishes to join others in congratulating you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this Committee, and also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. From my experience as Chair of this Committee during its previous session, I understand how difficult it is to lead the group of Member States, with their divergent interests and ideas, through such sensitive issues as disarmament and international security. However, I am confident that your devotion and thoughtful leadership will guide us through the challenging deliberations ahead to fruitful results. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in your noble endeavour.

Madam Chair,

2. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their delivery systems poses an ever increasing threat. Existing weapons have the potential to annihilate all of humanity several times over; the possibility of their use by terrorists who do not hesitate to target innocent civilians is an undeniable reality. At the same time, the integrity and relevance of the international non-proliferation system, centred on the NPT, is being undermined by the non-compliance of some states, while the unwillingness of nuclear weapons states to fulfil their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty is deepening the rift between the nuclear haves and have-nots. And the impasse on the Korean Peninsula and the ongoing Iranian nuclear issue continue to overshadow the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

3. To our great dismay, the international community is finding it more and more difficult to address these challenges and threats effectively. In various multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations, including the NPT Review Conference and the World Summit last year and the Review Conference on Small Arms this past July, progress has been frustrated. It has thus been something of a relief that we have seen a few modest but welcome developments since we met last year: the Conference on Disarmament intensified its discussions, the United Nations Disarmament Commission convened a substantive session and agreed on the additional measures for improving the effectiveness of its working methods, and productive discussions on the United Nations Register for Conventional Arms (UNRCA) are underway for seeking the expansion of its scope.

4. Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight my delegation's positions on several issues that we deem particularly important.

Madam Chair,

5. Despite all the setbacks and challenges, it remains a given fact that the NPT should continue to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and that the regime should be strengthened and improved. In addition to continuing to work on making the NPT universal, we should strive toward universal adoption of the IAEA Additional Protocol, which would enhance global confidence in the NPT system by bolstering its monitoring and verification capabilities. In our view, the Additional Protocol should become a new global safeguards and verification standard.

6. While non-nuclear weapons states should strengthen their commitments to non-proliferation, the nuclear weapons states must do their part to make real progress on nuclear disarmament, as called for in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Without the faithful fulfilment by the nuclear weapons states of their disarmament obligations under the NPT, our non-proliferation efforts will always be an uphill struggle. My delegation therefore encourages all nuclear weapons states to take a proactive approach toward the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

7. In the meantime, to relieve the security concerns of non-nuclear weapons states, we believe that strong and credible security assurances should be granted by nuclear weapons states to NPT States Parties that are in full compliance with the Treaty and other safeguard obligations.

8. Through such actions, the nuclear weapons states could significantly reduce the misguided perception of some non-nuclear weapons states that acquiring nuclear weapons is a path to increased security. And let me state here very clearly that the acquisition, development and maintenance of nuclear arsenals is not a sustainable path to peace or security. The Republic of Korea remains committed to the spirit of the NPT in its totality, and we remain hopeful that our children will inherit a world free of nuclear weapons.

9. As practical means of strengthening the non-proliferation regime, priority should be placed on the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), as was strongly recommended in the recent report of the WMD Commission headed by Mr. Hans Blix. These steps would significantly strengthen the NPT system and lead us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons. We hope that the momentum achieved through the structured and focused discussions at the recent Conference on Disarmament and the submission of a draft Treaty by the United States will propel us to an immediate start of negotiations on an FMCT.
10. Parallel efforts should be made to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes for other classes of WMDs, particularly the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The CWC has reached near universality, with the recent ratification of the 180th state, covering 98% of the global population, since its entry into force in 1997. However, the threat of chemical weapons proliferation has been kept alive by those few remaining States that still refuse the recurring calls from the international community to join the Convention. As we approach the 10th anniversary of the CWC's entry into force next year, we once again urge those countries outside the CWC to respond to our call and work together with the rest of the international community to achieve the complete elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles from the world. As for the BWC, my delegation expects that the Sixth Review Conference, slated for November of this year, will be a fresh opportunity to review the current status of the Convention and hopes that it will result in a plan of work to make the Convention more viable and relevant. In this context, the Republic of Korea plans to present a working paper on the Universality of the BWC.
11. Our efforts to strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes should be accompanied by measures to enhance the effectiveness of controls on materials and technology related to WMDs. In this regard, established export control systems such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement(WA) should be strengthened. In the area of means of delivery, we support strengthening of the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) and hope to see the number of participating countries increase further in years to come.
12. The proliferation of conventional weapons is also a matter of increasing concern to the international community. The excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms continues to cause tremendous human suffering, triggering armed conflicts, buttressing criminal activities, hampering economic development and threatening international peace and security. The adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action in 2001 and the International Instrument on Marking and Tracing in 2005 were landmarks in addressing the problem of small arms proliferation. Despite the failure to agree to further measures at the Small Arms Review Conference last July, we should not weaken our commitment to

fulfilling the Programme of Action; rather, we should redouble our efforts. To this end, my delegation supports the initiative for an international instrument on controlling international arms transfers. A good start would be establishing a Governmental Experts Group to examine this issue in detail.

13. With respect to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), my delegation welcomes the coming entry into force of the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War and sincerely hopes that the Third Review Conference, to be held in November of this year in Geneva, will conclude a legally binding instrument to address the humanitarian effects of the irresponsible use of mines other than antipersonnel mines (MOTAPM).

Madam Chair,

14. The Republic of Korea has actively participated in and contributed to all international efforts to strengthen the international non-proliferation and disarmament regimes, including implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 and its renewed resolution 1673, ratification of the IAEA Additional Protocol and strict adherence to the guidelines of all existing multilateral export control regimes. The Republic of Korea remains firmly committed to multilateral efforts to further the peace and security of our own region and the wider world.

15. In this vein, since 2002 we have convened an annual international conference on disarmament and non-proliferation, in cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA). This year's conference will be held in early December on Jeju Island on the theme: "Beyond the Stalemate: Reviving Efforts to Curb Proliferation of WMDs and Their Means of Delivery". The experience over the last year of chairing the GA First Committee, the UNDC, and Geneva CD further strengthened our resolve to contribute to advance in this field.

Madam Chair,

16. As part of our commitment to multilateralism, the Republic of Korea has been strongly supportive of multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia as a priority in its foreign and security policy. Northeast Asia remains in transition with much fluidity and uncertainty. Such multilateral security cooperation in this region would entail intensive discussion and broad support of the international community. We hope the efforts for multilateral security cooperation are met with constructive thinking and wholehearted support by all members of this committee.

Madam Chair,

17. Yesterday, 3 October, the DPRK declared its intent to conduct a nuclear test in the future. In this regard, the Government of the Republic of Korea has expressed its profound concern and regret, as the declaration is tantamount to an abrogation of the South-North Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The Government of the Republic of Korea is engaged in in-depth consultations with concerned parties on ways to resume the Six Party Talks and implement the September 19 Joint Statement. North Korea's declaration runs counter to such efforts to seek a resolution through dialogue. My government strongly urges the DPRK to show restraint and refrain from any action that might aggravate tension, to return immediately to the Six Party Talks without precondition, and to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes as the UN Security Council Resolution 1695 stipulates.

Madam Chair,

18. This year, the First Committee must once again confront a daunting agenda that reflects painful realities. It is all too easy to entangle ourselves in bureaucratic wrangling and leave real solutions for another year. Although it may be difficult to move forward, we should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Some success is better than none, and we must work together cooperatively and with a real sense of urgency to achieve as much as possible during our month-long deliberations. Under your able guidance, Madam Chair, I am hopeful that we can make real progress on the vital issues before us

Thank you.