



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

335 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel (212) 439-4000, Fax (212) 986-1083

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador KIM Hyun Chong
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations
First Committee of the General Assembly
General Debate**

9 October 2007

New York

<Check against Delivery>

Mr. Chairman,

1. Let me begin by joining others in congratulating you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this Committee, and also in offering my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election. I take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in your noble endeavours.

2. I would also like to pay tribute to the laudable efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to restructure the UN Secretariat's disarmament body, with the aim of revitalizing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda through a more focused effort and greater personal involvement.

Mr. Chairman,

3. For too long, the multilateral disarmament machinery has been in disarray, with no substantive progress in the major non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations. This situation has meant that the most pressing challenges of recent years have not been appropriately addressed, and the disappointing failures and setbacks have weakened confidence in the commitment to multilateralism more generally.

4. This must be changed. The international community has an urgent responsibility to reverse the failures and shortcomings of the multilateral disarmament community. A first step may be simply to recognize the signs of hope and progress.

5. In particular, the First Committee has achieved a number of successes over the last year. The overwhelming adoption of an arms trade treaty (ATT) resolution was a landmark initiative for the launch of deliberations on a treaty to curb the unregulated proliferation of conventional weapons. The adoption of a resolution on the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons (SALW) was another important step, reigniting a discussion on small arms and light weapons that had burned out following the failure of the First Review Conference, in July of 2006, to adopt a final document.

6. This year again, the First Committee has an extensive agenda that touches on a variety of highly important issues affecting international peace and security. My delegation hopes that this Committee will make further significant contributions during this session.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their delivery systems poses an ever increasing threat that must be given the utmost priority. It is an undeniable possibility that terrorists might use such weapons without hesitating to target innocent civilians. 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 the nuclear weapons states to fulfil their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty is deepening the rift between the nuclear haves and have-nots.

8. To break the current impasse, we need to strengthen the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime while remedying its deficiencies. To that end, we should make unswerving efforts to achieve the universality of the NPT. We should also place a priority on the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the immediate start of the negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). These steps would significantly strengthen the NPT system and lead us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons.

9. The process of preparing for the 2010 NPT Review Conference is crucial for breathing new life into the faltering nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this sense, we welcome the modest success of this year's first Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) in Vienna in May. We must do all we can to avoid any further setbacks in the NPT process, which could prove fatal to the NPT regime. Those NPT States Parties with nuclear weapons should faithfully implement their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty, while states that remain outside the NPT should accede to the Treaty at an early date.

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). My delegation welcomes the recent Statement adopted at the High-Level Meeting on the 10th Anniversary of the Entry into Force of the CWC, held just two weeks ago in this conference room. It provided a fitting opportunity to renew our commitment towards the full, universal, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention.

11. As for the BWC, my delegation welcomes the successful adoption by consensus at the 6th Review Conference last November of a final document that provides specific and concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention, including the establishment of an Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to assist States Parties.

12. Our efforts to strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes should also be accompanied by measures to enhance the effectiveness of controls on materials and technology related to WMD. Such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Australia Group (AG) and the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA).

13. In the area of means of delivery, the unregulated development, testing and proliferation of ballistic missiles has become a matter of grave concern, requiring prompt attention from the international community. In this regard, my delegation hopes that the 3rd Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles, which has begun its first session, will provide constructive guidance on how to address the complex issue of missiles in all its aspects.

Mr. Chairman,

14. Conventional weapons pose a destructive threat no less serious than WMD. The unrestrained proliferation of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, not only fuels and exacerbates conflicts, but also hampers socioeconomic and human development. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the progress made through the United Nations framework to address threats from conventional arms, particularly small arms and light weapons.

15. Though it is regrettable that the 1st Small Arms Review Conference last year failed to agree on further measures to strengthen the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, it nevertheless reaffirmed the relevance of the PoA and its continuing its implementation. My delegation hopes that the biennial meeting on implementation of the PoA to be convened next year will provide an opportunity to renew our commitment and seek ways to further strengthen implementation. My delegation also welcomes the successful completion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the brokering of small arms and light weapons and the valuable recommendations they presented to the General Assembly.

16. It is my pleasure to inform you of the recent breakthrough on the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Six-Party Talks have been the main vehicle for the resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue. Significant progress has been made in this process since its launch in 2003. In the Joint Statement of September 2005, the six nations agreed on a blueprint for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The Initial Actions Agreement of February this year took that consensus forward another step, laying out specific actions for the implementation of the Joint Statement.

17. Additional progress has been achieved during the recent round of the Six-Party Talks held in Beijing last month : the adoption of the agreement on the “Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement” that specifies the disablement of the core DPRK nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and a complete and correct declaration of all DPRK nuclear programmes by the end of this year. The successful completion of this disablement and declaration within the stipulated timeframe will allow us to enter the dismantlement phase next year.

18. The Republic of Korea will continue to cooperate closely with related parties for the smooth implementation of the agreement and the future advancement of the Six-Party Talks. In addition, we will make every effort for the Six-Party Talks process to move beyond the resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue and develop them into a multilateral security dialogue mechanism in Northeast Asia.

Mr. Chairman,

19. The Republic of Korea has done its utmost to participate in non-proliferation and disarmament efforts on a bilateral, sub-regional, regional and global level. To this end, my country hosted an international conference, together with Australia, in March of this year, on brokering controls, including in the area of WMDs, which I believe provided a valuable opportunity to pool our wisdom, experience and information. Since 2002 the Republic of Korea has hosted an annual international conference on disarmament and non-proliferation, in cooperation with the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs. The 6th Conference entitled “Towards a Fulfillment of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in the 21st Century: Review of the Current Challenges” will be held in Seoul in early December of this year. In addition, the Republic of Korea is planning to host a regional workshop with the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs and other co-sponsors next year to promote at the regional level the international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

20. The current difficulties in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly regarding nuclear weapons, can only be resolved by political commitment accompanied by real action. I sincerely hope, Mr. Chairman, that under your wise guidance, we might find a way to translate our successes in other fields into an engine for progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you.