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Statement

by

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at

The First Preparatory Committee for  
the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to  
the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

General Debate

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Vienna

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. My delegation is confident that under your able chairmanship, this session will indeed produce fruitful results. And I would like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation during the deliberations at this PrepCom.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea believes that the NPT should continue to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The three pillars the NPT stands on – nuclear disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy – should be promoted in a mutually reinforcing manner. Preserving the balance among them is vital to the credibility of the NPT regime.

Looking back on the global trend of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation in the recent past, my delegation is of the view that the NPT is still faced with daunting challenges. These include the proliferation risks such as the DPRK and Iranian nuclear issues, insufficient progress in nuclear disarmament, and the threat from a possible combination of nuclear weapons and terrorism.

In particular, an early resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue is vital to ensuring the integrity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as securing peace on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. Strenuous efforts have been made to achieve the verifiable denuclearization of the DPRK through the Six-Party Talks. However, to our dismay, the DPRK carried out a missile launch last month in direct violation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009).

The United Nations Security Council responded swiftly by adopting a Presidential Statement just three days after the launch. In the Statement, the Security Council strongly condemned the launch by the DPRK and

demands that the DPRK immediately comply fully with its obligations under Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874, including that it abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; immediately cease all related activities; and not conduct any further launches that use ballistic missile technology, nuclear tests or any further provocation. The DPRK should realize that further provocations will only exacerbate its isolation.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation continues to hold a firm belief that strengthening the NPT-based regime is the most effective response to the current pressing challenges. In this regard, I would like to highlight the following points to reinforce the NPT regime.

First, it is important to keep up the momentum generated from the 2010 Review Conference. The success of the 2010 RevCon provides a good point of departure for the 2015 review cycle.

Second, Additional Protocol together with the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement represents a new verification standard and the universal adherence to them is essential in ensuring confidence in the compliance of States Parties with their Treaty obligations. Based on this legal framework, the IAEA will be able to provide credible assurances not only on the non-diversion of declared materials but also on the absence of undeclared materials and activities, which will in turn promote transparency and confidence among states.

Third, nuclear disarmament is crucial for minimizing the threat of nuclear war and the unimaginable consequences that would come with it. In this respect, my delegation takes note of President Obama's remarks at Hankuk University on the occasion of his visit to Seoul in March. During his speech, he announced a plan to conduct a comprehensive study aimed at further reduction of US nuclear arsenal even beyond the target level of the New START. And he also said that the US will continue to seek discussions with Russia on a step it has never taken before - reducing not only its

strategic nuclear warheads, but also tactical weapons and warheads in reserve.

It is not an option, but rather a duty for all NPT parties, in particular the nuclear weapon states, to fulfill their obligation under Article VI of the Treaty and to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament. The first order of business should be an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the commencement of negotiations for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

Fourth, the Republic of Korea fully recognizes the inalienable right of all NPT parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, the exercise of these rights entails compliance with the obligations under the Treaty as reaffirmed in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In light of the sensitive nature of nuclear energy and its potentially devastating non-peaceful military applications, it is our firm belief that the full confidence of the international community in the exclusively peaceful nature of a State's nuclear program is prerequisite to realizing the benefits of peaceful use and applications.

Fifth, we also emphasize the importance of robust international cooperation to prevent nuclear terrorism. In this regard, the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit carried us a step forward to the goal of 'A World without Nuclear Weapons' by intensifying international efforts to combat nuclear and radiological terrorism which threatens global security. In particular, the Summit achieved meaningful progress in securing and minimizing nuclear materials, which can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons. As the host of the 2012 Seoul Summit, the Republic of Korea will continue to play a constructive role to enhance nuclear security through active participations in the work of the IAEA, the Global partnership and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT). In addition, we continue to support Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 1887, and fully endorse the guiding rules therein on nuclear non-proliferation, security, safety and safeguards.

Last but not least, the Republic of Korea takes note of the Istanbul meeting between E3+3 and Iran last month. The Republic of Korea welcomes the tireless efforts undertaken by the relevant parties. While it is our firm belief that the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as described in Article IV of the NPT should be fully respected, all suspicions and concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program should be addressed in accordance with its international obligations. In this regard, we call upon Iran to respond in a timely and positive manner to the calls of the international community and to restore international confidence regarding the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.

Mr. Chairman,

Inclosing, my delegation reaffirms our strong commitment to the NPT regime. And we assure you, Mr. Chairman, that the Republic of Korea will do its best for a successful 2015 Review Conference that is essential to furthering international peace and security.

Thank you. /END/