



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review
Conference**

General Debate

28 April 2014

New York

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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by extending my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. My delegation has every confidence that under your able chairmanship, this session will yield fruitful results.

The Republic of Korea believes that the NPT should continue to play a crucial role in nuclear non-proliferation and as a vital part of the international security architecture. The three pillars of the NPT should be promoted in a mutually reinforcing manner. Preserving a balance among them is vital for the credibility and integrity of the NPT regime.

Looking back on the global trends in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in recent years, my delegation views that the NPT is facing daunting challenges and tough tasks that require prompt and steadfast collective efforts from all NPT Parties. These include proliferation risks in various parts of the world, modest progress in nuclear disarmament, and the threat from the possible combination of nuclear weapons and terrorism.

North Korean nuclear issue

Of particular concern is the grave challenge posed by North Korea's continued development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Regardless of the international community's united and unequivocal message to abandon all its nuclear weapons and nuclear and ballistic missile programs, North Korea continues to reveal its ambition to develop nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems. North Korea adopted the simultaneous development of nuclear weapons and its economy as a national policy and is continuing its activities to advance its nuclear and missile capability. These actions not only threaten peace and security in the region and beyond, but also seriously undermine the integrity and credibility of the global non-proliferation regime.

What is worse is that Pyongyang recently implied a possible fourth nuclear test in its statement on March 30, which may result in fundamental change of the security landscape in Northeast Asia and impairment of the global non-proliferation regime. It is high time that the international community makes it clear, with one voice, that it will not tolerate North Korea's reckless and inexcusable behavior and will have North Korea pay the heavy price should it go ahead with another nuclear test.

In addition to the efforts to discourage North Korea's further provocation, my delegation would like to stress that the international community needs to redouble its efforts with a greater sense of urgency to achieve complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. The Republic of Korea strongly urges North Korea to abide by its international commitments and obligations under the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and to return to the NPT and NPT Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA at an early date.

Ways forward to reinforce the NPT regime

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation continues to believe that strengthening the NPT-based regime is the most effective way to respond to the current pressing challenges. In this regard, I would like to highlight the following points for reinforcing the NPT regime.

Non-Proliferation

I would first like to turn to non-proliferation issues. Ensuring full compliance with non-proliferation obligations is a prerequisite in sustaining the integrity of the NPT regime. In order to maintain and bolster international confidence in the NPT, it is imperative to ensure that non-compliance with NPT obligations will have clear and strong consequences. As the case of North Korea clearly

demonstrates, the abuse of the Treaty's withdrawal provision may seriously undermine the credibility of the NPT regime. It is therefore essential to properly address this issue in the 2015 review cycle.

The IAEA Additional Protocol together with the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement has served as an essential tool in providing high-level assurances on non-proliferation. These safeguards frameworks have the merit of verifying not only the non-diversion of declared materials but also the absence of undeclared materials and activities. In this regard, while welcoming the new ratification of Additional Protocol by 21 States since the 2010 NPT Review Conference, we strongly urge all State Parties which have not ratified the Protocol to do so as early as possible.

We are pleased to see the positive developments in the negotiations between the P5+1(E3+3) and Iran, in particular the Joint Plan of Action and its on-going implementation. The Republic of Korea fully supports the international efforts to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue in a peaceful and negotiated manner. In this regard, we made modest financial contributions to the IAEA's activities relating to the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action. We hope that the P5+1 and Iran will reach a final-stage agreement and resolve the outstanding issues, including the possible military dimensions (PMD).

Nuclear Disarmament

Let me now touch upon nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapon States Parties should step up their endeavors to take concrete steps for nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article 6 of the NPT and in line with the 2010 Action Plan. In this regard, we note that the United States recently announced an implementation plan to reduce nuclear forces under the New START. The Republic of Korea commends the P5 efforts to hold regular consultations to enhance mutual transparency and build a framework to further nuclear disarmament.

My delegation believes that the most urgent two tasks in pursuit of realistic nuclear disarmament are the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and on the immediate start of the negotiations for the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). We appreciate the significant role played by the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in detecting nuclear tests even though the Treaty has not yet come into effect. We would like to call upon those States that have not yet done so to ratify the CTBT. We also urge the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to embark on substantive negotiations on the FMCT as soon as possible. The UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) will hopefully be able to make a breakthrough in the current long-standing impasse on the FMCT within the time frame and mandate given by the General Assembly of the UN.

My delegation believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) are another useful tool in contributing to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as well as promoting security and transparency at the regional level. In this regard, we welcome the recent conclusion of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia between the regional States and the P5. In this vein, we also hope that the conference on a WMD-free zone in the Middle East will be convened at the earliest possible time.

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy

Regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Republic of Korea, with firsthand experience of the benefits from nuclear energy in our development path, fully supports the inalienable right of all States Parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, this right must be exercised in accordance with the obligations outlined in Articles I, II and III, and be accompanied by effective safety and security.

As the fifth largest producer of nuclear energy in the world, the Republic of Korea remains committed to sharing its experience with other countries. The Republic of Korea is one of the major contributors to IAEA Technical Cooperation Programs which help developing countries with assistance in terms of expertise and infrastructure for the civil nuclear energy use. We are a staunch supporter of the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI), having contributed more than 4 million US dollars to projects related to mitigating climate change and developing cancer treatments.

Prevention of nuclear terrorism

Last but not least, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of international cooperation for the prevention of nuclear terrorism. The Republic of Korea, as the host of the Nuclear Security Summit in 2012, is contributing to the global efforts to combat nuclear terrorism. At The Hague Nuclear Security Summit on March 24, President Park Geun-hye made a four-point proposal for the strengthening of the global nuclear security architecture. It proposed (1) to take a holistic approach that promotes synergy among nuclear security, disarmament and non-proliferation; (2) to pursue a regional mechanism; (3) to narrow the capacity gap among states; and (4) to take steps to tackle the emerging threat of cyber terrorism against nuclear facilities.

As a member of the UN Security Council for 2013-14, we are also serving as Chair of the 1540 Committee. UN Security Council Resolution 1540 offers a fundamental framework to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. We will host an open debate of the Security Council on nonproliferation, with the topic “Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of Resolution 1540 (2004) and Looking Ahead” on May 7, during our Council presidency.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by expressing my delegation’s wish for the success of the 2015 Review Conference with a view to contributing further to the peace and security of the international community as enshrined in the NPT. In this regard, we reassure you of our delegation’s full support and cooperation in the process.

Thank you. /End/