

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador KIM In-chul
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea
to the UN Secretariat and International Organizations in Geneva**

General Debate

**Second Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

23 April, 2018

Mr. Chairman,

I feel privileged to speak on behalf of the ROK government at this very critical moment for the future of the global nonproliferation regime of which the NPT remains as cornerstone.

As we begin the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, I would like to reaffirm the Republic of Korea's commitment to the Treaty and to maintaining and strengthening the nonproliferation regime we have built together. We firmly believe that the NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and that the three pillars of the Treaty – disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful

uses – are mutually reinforcing and thus should be pursued in a balanced manner.

This review cycle is particularly important for many reasons. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Treaty, the Review Conference will be a stock-taking of what we have achieved and what we have not. Most importantly, we need to prove that this Treaty is relevant today and the work of the NPT community is genuinely contributing to a better and safer world for future generations.

In spite of the remarkable achievements we have made over the past years, there are still serious challenges to the Treaty and the global nonproliferation regime. The North Korean nuclear issue is of particular concern to us. Even within the short period following the last PrepCom, North Korea conducted its 6th nuclear test on 3 September and launched multiple ballistic missiles in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. There is no doubt that North Korea's nuclear and missile development seriously undermines the entire nonproliferation regime based on the NPT, the de-facto moratorium on nuclear testing and, more fundamentally, the UN Charter.

Such actions were met with nothing but ever stronger measures, including further strengthened sanctions imposed by UN Security Council resolutions 2356, 2371 and 2375. As the entire NPT community has repeatedly declared, North Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear weapon state under the Treaty. The only path for the regime is to abandon its nuclear weapons programme in a

complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and return at an early date to compliance with NPT obligations and IAEA Safeguards.

As the core stakeholder of this issue, the Republic of Korea has worked closely with the international community to strengthen the implementation of the UN Security Council sanctions measures. At the same time, we also tried not to lose sight of efforts to resume dialogue in pursuit of a peaceful resolution of the issue. The ROK government made consistent efforts to foster an atmosphere of dialogue which led to North Korea's participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics and the visit of North Korea's high-level delegation to Seoul. Building on such positive momentum, our special envoy's visit to Pyongyang and Washington resulted in agreements to hold summit meetings between the two Koreas as well as between the United States and North Korea.

As the two Koreas prepare for the historic inter-Korean Summit, North Korea made an announcement that it would discontinue nuclear tests as well as ballistic missile tests of intermediate and intercontinental range and to dismantle its nuclear test site. We welcome this announcement as a positive step forward.

This Friday, the inter-Korean Summit will be held at the South Korean side of Panmunjeom. Along with the scheduled US-North Korea Summit, it will serve as an opportunity to lay stepping stones towards denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean

Peninsula. My government will continue to uphold the unwavering principle of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as we seek ways to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear issue and establish permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. At the same time, as we move forward, sanctions, in particular those pursuant to UN Security Council resolutions, will continue to be fully implemented until North Korea takes substantial actions for denuclearization. Taking this opportunity, I would like to ask your attention to and support for our efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

The worsening security environment is another source of concern. We are witnessing growing tensions among nuclear weapon states and increasing disagreements on compliance and solutions. As a result, the conditions for nuclear disarmament in general are worsening.

Disarmament cannot move forward in isolation. It is deeply interlinked with the security situation of today.

If we want genuine progress in disarmament, efforts to create the environment conducive to nuclear disarmament should be made. Those efforts may include easing tensions, crisis management, risk reduction, and communication to avoid miscalculation. An

atmosphere of frank dialogue and cooperation is essential as well. Hasty attempts to enforce disarmament cannot make real progress nor contribute to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We should work together to improve the security environment in general, while taking practical and effective steps to facilitate disarmament efforts. In this regard, the ROK supports the ongoing efforts of the High-Level Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group and look forward to the final report to be concluded this year. We are also committed to the goal of the early entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, in this sense, commend the works made by the CTBTO and the signatories to build and strengthen the International Monitoring System (IMS). Nuclear disarmament verification (NDV) is also our priority. As we believe that cooperation and preparation for verifiable disarmament can bridge the gap between nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states, the ROK government will host the working group meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) in July.

Mr. Chairman

Most of us share the understanding that peaceful uses of nuclear energy, among others, is an area where we can form wider consensus,

and thus, make positive progress in this review cycle.

Exercise of the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy should entail compliance with nonproliferation and safeguards obligations. As IAEA safeguards provide crucial assurance of a State's compliance with its NPT obligation, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the strengthening of the IAEA Safeguards system, including by universalizing the Additional Protocol (AP). In order to make sure safeguards are fully in place, the IAEA should be provided with the necessary resources to carry out its mandate.

Applications of nuclear technology in the fields of health, environment, and agriculture, among others, if well explored, could reinforce the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We endorse the IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) program as the core mechanism in providing developing countries greater access to peaceful uses and applications of nuclear energy. In this regard, the Republic of Korea has been providing financial and other forms of contributions to the TC program. In particular, as the host of the Regional Office of the Regional Cooperation Agreement (RCA), we continue to take an active part in providing capacity-building resources, training, and technical support to developing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

We also believe that ensuring safe nuclear development and security of nuclear materials is essential for the sustainable use of atomic energy. As one of the early contributors to building the nuclear

security architecture, the Republic of Korea has actively participated in the preparatory processes of the 2019 IAEA Ministerial Conference and the 2021 Amended CPPNM Review Conference. We also strongly recommend that states that have not done so join the ICSANT and the CPPNM and its amendment as early as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

Full compliance of the NPT in a balanced manner is the essence of the global nonproliferation regime. In spite of diverging views and priorities, all States Parties share the responsibility to maintain and strengthen this regime. If we cannot prove our work is worthwhile, the world will doubt the validity of the regime. We cannot afford to fail at this review cycle. I assure you that my delegation will do our part. Thank you. /END/