

Cluster I (*Disarmament*)

During the past half-century, the NPT has not only been the cornerstone of international peace and security but also one of the pivotal pillars of the rules-based international order. Despite the remarkable success, however, there are rising concerns that the commitment of nuclear weapon states to implement their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty is weakening. The leadership and sincerity of nuclear states that gave birth to the NPT in 1969 and its permanent extension in 1995 are questioned more and more by many non-nuclear states. What's more concerning is the deepening erosion of trust between states with and without nuclear weapons, which in turn, is fueling the sense of crisis over the relevance and credibility of the NPT regime.

Against this backdrop, my delegation believes that the biggest task of the 2020 NPT Review Conference is to build a momentum to rebuild trust among state parties, particularly between nuclear and non-nuclear states, and to quench the grooming sense of crisis over the NPT regime. Implementation and progress under Article VI, nuclear disarmament, lies at the core of success of the 2020 Review process.

Nuclear disarmament is indeed a shared responsibility, and we all need to reaffirm and faithfully implement our commitments under Article VI of the NPT, the 13 practical steps of the 2000 NPT Review Conference Final Document as well as the 2010 Action Plan mapped out at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. However, the leading role of the nuclear-weapon states is also of particular importance. In this vein, the Republic of Korea welcomes the ongoing cooperation and dialogue process among the P5, including the 8th official P5 meeting in Beijing this year. We hope to see the P5 continue its interactions

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and work towards promoting transparency, strengthening confidence-building, and reducing nuclear risks.

Enhanced communication and cooperation between the nuclear states and non-nuclear states can also facilitate our work on nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we welcome the efforts for Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament as this will enable frank dialogue between all parties involved, both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states. We look forward to participating in the Working Group Plenary meeting in July this year and stand ready to contribute to the Group's discussion.

The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) is another good example of cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear states. We believe that the substantial and technical discussion on verification will not only help make us better prepared for the challenges associated with nuclear disarmament verification but also better understand each other's position and thus provide a favorable political momentum for progress in nuclear disarmament. Korea hosted one of its Working Group meetings in Seoul last year, and my government fully appreciates the substantial progress made and is committed to working with partners to present concrete deliverables by 2020. We also welcome the work of the Group of Government of Experts on Nuclear Verification to this end.

New initiatives and suggestions to facilitate our work on nuclear disarmament are also welcomed. Efforts to retain hard-won agreements, such as the New-START are important. Making progress on long-overdue issues, including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the commencement of the negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) is imperative. Both treaties are essential in preventing qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons and

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bears great importance in both nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

The Republic of Korea, as the Chair of the 2019 Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, will do its utmost to make sure that the Preparatory Commission fulfills its mandated role. We will also work closely with the chairs of Article XIV Conference to reaffirm the international community's commitment to the early entry into force of the Treaty. Taking this opportunity, Korea welcomes the ratification of the CTBT by Eswatini, Myanmar, Thailand, and Zimbabwe since the last NPT Review Conference in 2015, and we urge all Annex II countries, including the DPRK, to access and ratify the Treaty.

We should also make additional efforts for the early commencement of FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope to see further discussions take place based on the works of the High-level Expert Preparatory Group in 2018.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to remind everyone that historic treaties like the NPT came into force in the middle of a crisis. We also have to recall that humanity has developed this rules-based order in pursuit of common interests and that it has had a long history of competition and conflict. It is time for all of us to keep up the self-fulfilling optimism.

Korea reaffirms its commitment to contributing and cooperating for fruitful outcomes of this PrepCom and hopes this Committee would lay the groundwork for a successful 2020 NPT Review Conference, during which we will celebrate the Treaty's half-century since its entry into force.

Thank you. /End/