

**First Committee of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly  
General Debate  
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Oh Joon  
Permanent Representative  
12 October 2015**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Chair of the First Committee during its 70th session. I assure you of my delegation's full support for the work of the Committee, and look forward to a productive session under your leadership.

Mr. Chairman,

70 years ago, the world came to grips with the new challenge posed by the destructive power of nuclear weapons.

Ever since the first General Assembly resolution in 1946 that identified the goal of eliminating weapons of mass destruction, preventing the spread and use of these deadly weapons has been an important part of the United Nations' efforts to safeguard international peace and security.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been a cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Treaty has helped curb the spread of nuclear weapons, and avoid a world with more than dozens of nuclear weapon States that many had feared.

More recently, a historic nuclear deal was reached between P5+1 and Iran, shedding a new ray of hope for peace and stability in the region and the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

However, nearly 70 years after the first General Assembly resolution, our vision of a world without nuclear weapons still remains elusive.

There are still reportedly around 16,000 nuclear weapons in existence today, and more progress is needed in nuclear disarmament.

The global non-proliferation architecture has gaps and loopholes, and is faced with old and new challenges. The nuclear and ballistic missile programs by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) remain as the gravest challenge to the global non-proliferation regime. The continued reports of use of chemical weapons in Syria are deeply concerning.

The threat of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction is becoming increasingly real. Cyberspace and outer space are demanding new sets of rules to ensure their security.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to stress some essential tasks that should underpin our current and future efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation.

First, we need renewed political will and leadership to realize our vision of a nuclear weapon-free world.

It is disappointing that this year's NPT Review Conference could not build on the positive momentum created at the 2010 Review Conference. For too long, the debate over prioritizing one pillar over another has hindered our progress on strengthening the NPT regime.

We all know that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interdependent and mutually reinforcing goals that must be pursued simultaneously. The political will of both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states is needed more than ever to break the current deadlock and to set off this virtuous cycle.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), we call on each of the eight States whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force to show leadership by being the first to take action. The ROK hosted a CTBT Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) meeting in Seoul this June, adopting the Seoul Declaration which called for all Annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay and urged the DPRK to refrain from any further nuclear test.

A stronger political impetus is needed to overcome the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, and to begin negotiations on a Treaty Banning the Production of Fissile Materials (FMCT) without delay.

The ROK stands ready to work with other Member States to build on the advancement made in the course of the negotiations in 2015 NPT Review Conference to bring a tangible progress in nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

Second, the international community should step up measures to address the new proliferation threats involving non-state actors, including terrorists.

Recently, the world has witnessed unprecedented and increasingly dangerous trends in terrorism. It is well known that extremist terrorist groups have been keen on obtaining nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The catastrophic consequences that will result when these deadly weapons fall into the hands of terrorists will be hard to imagine. It is more urgent than ever to prevent this "black swan" of our age.

Full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 will be vital in preventing terrorists from acquiring dangerous weapons and materials.

The Nuclear Security Summit process has galvanized key efforts to secure nuclear materials across the globe and to bolster international nuclear security framework. The ROK looks forward to another successful Summit in Washington next year, and hopes that it will contribute to building a sustainable, enduring post-2016 nuclear security architecture.

We must continue our efforts toward the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and their effective implementation.

Third, the international community must do more to address the real weapons that are bringing mass destruction today, which are small arms and light weapons (SALW).

There are more than 900 million small arms in circulation worldwide, and these weapons are involved in almost all armed conflicts that threaten international peace and security today.

Illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of these weapons have deep, cross-cutting ramifications for all three pillars of the UN, namely peace and security, development and human rights.

The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) last year was an important milestone in our efforts to address this grave challenge. A universal implementation of this Treaty will help stem irresponsible flows of small arms into conflict zones and to perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations. The Republic of Korea, for its part, is taking steps to ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible time.

We welcome Security Council resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015), which have paved the way for the enhanced role of the Council in tackling this serious challenge to global security.

Fourth, we need to address the emerging issues in disarmament and non-proliferation, including outer space security, cyber security and lethal autonomous weapons systems, among others.

The rapid technological developments call for our strengthened work in these areas. The Republic of Korea supports, and has actively participated in, the efforts to establish International Code of Conduct (ICOC) on outer space activities, as well as the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on information security. The ROK looks forward to further progress in these initiatives, and stands ready to play a constructive role.

Mr. Chairman,

Last but not least, I would like to draw your attention to the ever-growing threat of North Korea's programs of weapons of mass destruction including its nuclear programs.

The latest nuclear deal on the Iranian case has demonstrated that the trickiest knot in nuclear non-proliferation can be undone through diplomacy and dialogue. Now is the time to resolve the last remaining challenge to the global non-proliferation regime posed by the DPRK.

The international community should send a clear and unified message to the DPRK that it cannot find any future in its nuclear programs. The DPRK must realize that it cannot have the status of a nuclear weapon state in any circumstance, and that denuclearization alone will offer them the right path toward peace, security and economic development. We urge North Korea to fully comply with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, abandon its nuclear programs, and take the path of dialogue and cooperation.

We further express our grave concern over the DPRK's continuous threat of launching a so-called 'satellite' any time it decides. The Republic of Korea urges North Korea to refrain from any further provocations in violation of the Security Council resolutions, which prohibit any launch by the DPRK using ballistic missile technology. Any such provocation will be met with a firm response from the international community, and will only serve to deepen the DPRK's isolation.

As President Park Geun-Hye stressed in her address to the General Assembly, if North Korea takes the bold step to give up its nuclear ambition and chooses the path of openness and cooperation, the Republic of Korea will work with the international community to support North Korea in developing its economy and improving the lives of its people.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude by once again pledging my delegation's full commitment to work for the success of this year's First Committee and beyond. Thank you.