

First Committee of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly

Thematic Debate on other WMD

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Mr. Chairman,

Since their entry into force, both BWC and CWC have served as the core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and continuously moved towards the universalization. However, given the rapid development of science and technology, combined with their wide availability and inherently dual-use nature, the international regime against biological and chemical weapons need to adapt itself to meet the emerging challenges.

With regard to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Republic of Korea has been consistent in its support for reinforcing the BWC regime, based on each State Party's robust implementation of the obligations under the Convention. This should be complemented with strong confidence building measures between the States Parties, sufficient capacity-building and assistance, as well as adequate consideration on the impact of the relevant technological developments.

The efforts to strengthen the Convention should be both pragmatic and realistic. We believe the inter-sessional program as agreed at the 7th BWC Review Conference in 2011 has contributed to building a common understanding and taking effective measures for strengthening the Treaty regime. Based on its final document, we are ready to work with others to further develop the mechanisms for strengthening the Convention in the run up to the 8th BWC Review Conference in 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea is committed to the international cooperation and assistance efforts to enhance the capacity-building of states parties, which include various projects from the construction of medical facilities to the provision of technical assistance and medical staff training in cooperation with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). Furthermore, we take an active role in the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSa) with a view to facilitating cooperation and assistance for capacity-building towards achieving our common goal of combating infectious disease and bioterrorism. Against this backdrop, the Republic of Korea hosted a GHSa ministerial-level meeting this

September in Seoul, and is actively participating in the Multi-Sectoral Rapid Response steering group.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC, which marked as the first treaty to put comprehensive ban on certain type of weapons of mass destruction. I would like to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Republic of Korea to the convention and to the success of the 2016 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Since September 2013, the international community has worked together to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons program. Despite many difficulties, our joint efforts have successfully accomplished the removal of the declared chemical weapon stockpile from Syria. 98% of Syria's declared chemical weapons have been destroyed and progress has been made with respect to the twelve chemical weapons production facilities in Syria.

Despite this achievement, however, my delegation is deeply concerned over the continuing allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria. In this regard, the Republic of Korea supports the continued work of the FFM (Fact Finding Mission) and DAT (Declaration Assessment Team) to establish the whole truth of the Syrian chemical weapons program, and welcomes the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). To ensure its effective implementation, the OPCW and the United Nations should continue close cooperation and all parties in Syria should cooperate fully with the JIM.

My delegation is also concerned over the recent report that terrorist groups, including ISIL, may have acquired chemical agents that can be used as weapon. Considering the increasing threat posed by non-state actors and the dual nature of chemical agents, the prevention of the hostile use of toxic chemicals as weapons by non-State actors should be one of our priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

100 year has passed since the first chemical weapons attack happened in Ieper during the First World War. In order to prevent the use of chemical weapons, achieving universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention is an utmost priority. My delegation welcomes the accession of Myanmar and Angola to the Convention and urges the few remaining countries outside the Convention, including North Korea, to follow suit without any delay or precondition. /End/