

Opening Statement

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UN-ROK Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues: *Changing Security Dynamics and their Implications for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation*

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It is a pleasure and honour, on behalf of the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs, to declare open this important conference on disarmament and non-proliferation challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea, and in particular to Mr. Cho Chang-beom, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, for the co-operation extended to the United Nations in convening this very timely meeting in such a beautiful location.

Few can doubt that the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 and other events like the tragic bombing in Bali in this neighbourhood have had a profound and lasting

impact upon security perceptions around the world. A simple but reliable indicator of international tension is found in the figures on global military expenditures, which have been rising since 1998. According to SIPRI, this spending rose to \$839 billion last year and the figure for 2002 will surely continue this upward trend. The UN's Department of Disarmament Affairs has for many years been seeking to promote greater transparency in this area by encouraging greater use of its Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. Last year, however, only 79 states reported data using this instrument, including only 13 -- or only one in four -- of the 53 states in the greater Asian region.

The Department is also responsible for maintaining the UN's Register of Conventional Arms, which records data on the production and trade in seven categories of major conventional weapons. While the Republic of Korea has contributed to this register since its creation in 1992, ten Asian states have not made a single submission. Last year, just over half of Asian states reported data to the Register -- though less than the year before, this does represent a slight improvement on the region's average participation rate over the past decade. In fairness, all regions would benefit from increased use of these two transparency measures.

The need for greater progress is also apparent in the field of missiles which the noted UN scholar, Inis Claude, once called "infernal combustion engines." Though the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) went into effect over three decades ago, many of even the keenest observers of international security forget that the Preamble of that historic treaty identified the goal of eliminating all delivery systems of nuclear weapons. In April 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called the world's attention to the need for multilateral norms with respect to these weapons, and the UN General Assembly later passed two resolutions on this subject, each setting up a governmental experts group to study the problem of missiles in all its aspects. Late last month, a group of states gathered in The Hague to launch an "International Code of Conduct" on missiles. In time, these initiatives and others may together result in practical initiatives to promote a new global disarmament norm for missiles. I can think of no region that would benefit more from such a norm than the region encompassing the huge Asian landmass -- an area with many other unmet social and economic needs, an area that already hosts too many missile programmes, and an area in need of some imaginative disarmament initiatives.

In this prevailing climate of concern and uncertainty, it comes as no surprise that both non-proliferation and disarmament are facing new challenges as well, particularly with respect to weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Though these recent terrorist acts did not involve the use of such weaponry, they have made the world a lot more aware for the kinds of catastrophic consequences that might have resulted from any such use. They have also abruptly and categorically demonstrated that nuclear deterrence and massive national defence establishments offer no guarantees against the full gamut of possible threats from non-state actors.

Yet as public awareness of the dangers of terrorism grows, and as the people come to understand the limitations of purely military responses to these threats, the importance of the

WMD treaty regimes will only grow in the years ahead. The regimes help by promoting both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives, by making it harder for individuals and groups to acquire specialized weapons materials, and perhaps most importantly of all, by helping to strengthen a global norm against the very existence of WMD.

There are many efforts underway at the United Nations relating to this subject. Security Council resolution 1373 created a special committee on counter-terrorism and set forth several specific actions for all states to take to alleviate the global terrorist threat. The General Assembly, meanwhile, adopted resolution 56/24 T, which specifically stressed the important contributions of disarmament and non-proliferation in addressing the WMD terrorist threat. The Secretary-General also established a Policy Working Group on the UN and Terrorism with several subgroups to look into the many aspects of this threat. I had the honour to chair the sub-group that dealt with WMD and terrorism. It paid particular attention to the problem of strengthening the physical security and safeguards of the special materials that can be used as nuclear or radiological weapons. In its conclusions, this sub-group identified several possible contributions of the United Nations system in reducing the WMD terrorism risk, including initiatives in the fields of monitoring and assistance in the event such weapons are used. The modest success achieved at the recently concluded BWC Review Conference included a decision to work on this aspect in the period ahead.

We should also recall the twelve United Nations conventions dealing with the issue of terrorism -- for if we wish to have some chance of successfully containing terrorism, the world must ensure that these commitments will be fulfilled and that treaties will achieve the universal membership they deserve. There is in addition an urgent need for progress in concluding an additional treaty on the suppression of nuclear terrorism. These instruments, combined with the treaty regimes for the elimination and non-proliferation of all WMD, offer the basic architecture for the world's coordinated response to the gravest threats to international peace and security in this new century.

With respect to the larger problem of eliminating all nuclear weapons per se, the primary responsibility for concrete progress in this field remains in the hands of the States parties of the NPT, in particular the nuclear-weapon states. One day, the world community may decide to establish a new permanent institution to serve as a secretariat of this treaty -- just as the time may also come when we finally have a nuclear weapons convention. Until then, however, there is considerable room for progress in the field of nuclear disarmament at the national, regional, and international levels. I strongly believe that there could be no better way to serve the goal of non-proliferation -- while simultaneously reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism -- than by revitalizing the process of global nuclear disarmament.

As part of a persistent global effort to address this challenge, the 2000 NPT Review Conference identified "thirteen steps" needed for progress in nuclear disarmament. Many of these steps, however, have either been abandoned -- like the preservation of the ABM Treaty and the entry into force of START II -- or postponed indefinitely, like the CTBT. Other steps included the need

to improve transparency, the issuance of regular reports, and the application of "principle of irreversibility" in disarmament agreements -- and new progress is needed in each of these areas. Additional efforts are needed to revitalize the UN's own disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament -- the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum -- and the UN Disarmament Commission.

The NPT regime is also challenged in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and has to confront developments that go well beyond the instances of non-compliance by Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

On the issue of DPRK -- which is so important for the security of the whole region and indeed of the world -- the United Nations is extremely concerned -- and rightly so -- about the reported existence of a programme to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. Such a development is clearly inconsistent with the DPRK's international obligations, including those under UN Security Council Resolution 825 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which prohibits its non-nuclear-weapons states from having unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. I am encouraged that members of the world community have not simply voiced their concerns over this latest development, but have expressed their willingness to search for ways and means to pursue a peaceful solution, one that avoids any new threats to the security of this important region. I endorse the IAEA Board of Governors' resolution dated 29 November requesting the DPRK to co-operate with the IAEA in terms of its safeguards agreement.

It goes without saying that compliance is vital with respect to both disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. On 23 October this year, the First Committee recognized this point by adopting -- without a vote -- a US-sponsored resolution that inter alia urged "all States parties to arms limitation and disarmament and non-proliferation agreements to implement and comply with the entirety of all provisions of such agreements".

It is of course premature to predict the specific, long-term impacts of the events of 11 September and Bali and of the new dynamics in the international system on the prospects for nuclear arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament and, from a more general perspective, on international peace and security. One hopes, however, that these tragedies will lead to a profound re-assessment of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and an entirely new attitude to the whole idea of weapons-based approaches to defence.

Regional initiatives can definitely help. Last September, experts from the five Central Asian states agreed in Samarkand on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region -- the first such zone entirely north of the Equator. On 17 December, representatives of these states will meet with officials from the five nuclear-weapon-states, a meeting that will hopefully clear the way for the formal signature and early entry into force of this important treaty. While nuclear weapon states cannot have a veto on freely arrived at agreements on nuclear weapon free zones, their co-operation in providing security assurances is vital especially as we prepare for a successful 2005 NPT Review Conference.

It is now indisputable that the many military, political, economic, and environmental threats that WMD pose to humanity -- and the new challenges posed by international terrorism -- will require a level of international cooperation on a scale far beyond what we have witnessed so far. Future progress will require the increased involvement of national and regional groups and interests across the globe, linked in a common cause -- a coalition drawing its ultimate power and authority from support among the people. As President Kim Dae-jung stated in his Nobel Lecture two years ago, "The people are heaven. The will of the people is the will of heaven. Revere the people, as you would heaven." While this was a central tenet in the political thought of China and Korea some three thousand years ago, its democratic truth remains eternal and directly relevant in addressing the issues now before this conference. The Asia-Pacific region has been cradle of the world's great religions, philosophies and civilizations. Today it is the focus of dynamic economic growth. The fusion of ancient wisdom and modern technology can only serve the people in conditions of peace and security. For this disarmament and reduced military expenditures are vital.

I look forward to hearing the many diverse and illuminating views and opinions of the experts gathered here today on these far-reaching and important issues -- and I wish you well in all of your important work ahead.