



**2016 Seoul Defence Dialogue**

**“Complex Security Crises: Challenges and Solutions”**

**Special Session 1: UN Global Peace Leadership and Peace Operations**

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High Representative for Disarmament Affairs  
United Nations



**Seoul , Korea**  
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#### **Special Session 1: UN Global Peace Leadership and Peace Operations**

#### **Remarks by Mr KIM Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

**8 September 2016, Seoul**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure to address this distinguished forum in my home town, Seoul. I congratulate the Republic of Korea and its Ministry of Defense for their leadership in establishing this dialogue. The Seoul Defence Dialogue is becoming a major regional forum for grappling with the security issues that affect Northeast Asia and the world.

The theme of this year’s dialogue, Complex Security Crises, is timely. The global strategic context is more fluid and troubling than ever.

The issues you have and will discuss in plenary are of particular relevance. They are also central to the work of the United Nations, including the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Today I want to highlight three prominent issues.

First, weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Around 15,000 nuclear weapons still exist. These weapons pose an existential threat to humanity and our environment. But divisions over how to eliminate them are growing deeper.

On regional challenges, the successful completion of negotiations between the E3+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was a genuine success for diplomacy.

Implementation of the Plan over the coming years will be challenging and requires sustained engagement. The international community must remain vigilant in keeping it on track.

The continuing defiance by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea of the united call by the international community is deeply troubling. The DPRK must take steps to de-escalate the situation and return to denuclearization through sincere dialogue. Denuclearization represents the only pathway to lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. International humanitarian assistance must also continue to address the needs of the people of the DPRK.

Dangerous chemicals have once again emerged as weapons of war in the Middle East. The United Nations-Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (UN-OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism, in fulfilling its mandate to identify the perpetrators of these horrific

acts, has found that there is “a diversification of both the type of chemicals used and the actors involved”.

The international community must remain united in restoring the taboo against the use of chemical weapons. It cannot be allowed to become the new normal in any conflict. For that, the perpetrators of these horrible acts must be held accountable.

Ladies and gentlemen

Second, we need to pay greater attention to a dangerous and growing nexus between chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) security, terrorism and emerging threats and risks, including cyber security.

Vicious non-state actors are actively trying to acquire all kinds of CBRN weapons. These actors operate on the territory of states that unfortunately lack the capacity to address these dangerous activities. They take advantage of the open borders that define the modern world. They have benefitted from technological advances that have made means of production and methods of delivery for CBRN materials cheaper, easier and more accessible.

The Joint Investigative Mechanism’s finding that the Islamic State was the perpetrator of a chemical weapon attack in the Syrian Arab Republic is further evidence of this threat.

As Secretary-General Ban told the Security Council two weeks ago, “The impact and consequences of a biological attack on a civilian target could far exceed those of a chemical or radiological attack. But investment in the international architecture dealing with these different types of WMD is not commensurate with their possible effects.”

Any biological attack would almost certainly become a complex international health and humanitarian emergency, disrupting law and order. But the coordination and capabilities required to respond – across the national, regional and global levels – are unclear and untested. There is no multilateral prevention and verification agency for biological weapons, as there is for nuclear, radiological and chemical threats and risks.

New advances in information technology, artificial intelligence, unmanned vehicles and 3D printing have significantly benefitted the well-being of the global population. However, the same technology could significantly multiply the effects of CBRN devices.

Vulnerabilities are increasing as our world becomes increasingly connected and networked. I am particularly worried about a cyber-attack by a non-state actor on critical infrastructure such as a nuclear power plant. There have already been repeated attempts to hack nuclear power facilities and the possibility of a “security Fukushima” must be prevented.

The international community needs to step up its endeavors to expand common ground to ensure the peaceful use of cyberspace and, particularly, the intersection between cyberspace

and critical infrastructure. Last week members of a UN Group of Governmental Experts held their first session to build on international norms and principles for responsible State behavior in cyberspace.

There is an urgent need, in the words of Secretary-General Ban, to protect civilians “from online attacks, just as effectively as they are protected from physical attacks.”

Ladies and gentlemen

The third and final issue I want to raise is the global epidemic of conflict and its detrimental impact on sustainable development.

Approximately 1.5 billion people live in fragile and conflict affected states or with dangerous levels of violent crime. In contrast to the overall decline of the 1990s, armed conflict has tripled since 2008. Likewise, direct conflict deaths have tripled, from 56,000 in 2008 to 180,000 in 2014. The number of refugees and internally displaced people also tripled. When explosive weapons are used in conflicts, 90 percent of casualties are innocent civilians.

The UN now deploys 16 peacekeeping missions around the world, involving nearly 120,000 uniformed and civilian personnel. This is up from 87,000 ten years ago. Additionally, there are 11 peace-building or special political missions involving 4,000 personnel and more than 40 special representatives or special envoys of the Secretary-General deployed.

Conflict causes capital flight, school closures, destruction of infrastructure, collapsed health services and economic losses to economies that can least afford it. The UN is now feeding around 100 million people in manmade or natural disasters every day.

As last year’s historic Sustainable Development Agenda made clear: Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security. Peace cannot be sustained without development.

The Sustainable Development Goals made, for the first time, a direct link between development and disarmament. Target 4 of Goal 16 recognizes the need to significantly reduce the global illicit arms flow.

This link was recognized because weapons are the fuel that fires the engine of conflict. The readily available supply of weapons from illicit arms flows is a main driver of conflicts. It puts UN personnel and humanitarian workers in daily danger. It is also used as a tool of serious human rights violations.

Ladies and gentlemen

All of this leaves the obvious question, what is to be done?

First of all, achieving a safer and more peaceful world ultimately depends on the universal and complete implementation of disarmament and non-proliferation commitments.

From the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions to the Arms Trade Treaty, the elimination of WMD and the strict regulation of conventional weapons can only be made possible through concerted action by all states.

This includes a commitment to inclusive dialogue, flexibility and creativity. Progress requires a positive “perfect storm” of three powerful forces working together. Government coalitions can bring diplomatic pressure. Civil society groups can rouse public opinion and remind officials of the need to advance real public interests. Visionary leaders must lead from the top down.

Second, we need to sharpen our tools for peace. As Secretary-General Ban has recognized, “There is a collective sense that our toolbox has not kept pace with the emerging and increasingly complex challenges we face in peace and security.”

The first step is to consolidate “peace operations”, encompassing all three aspects of prevention, peacekeeping and peace building.

The “continuum” of peace operations must be enhanced. This means focusing on prevention and mediation by engaging early and ensuring peace building to prevent the relapse into conflict. It means having flexible mandates tailored to individual conflicts. It means ensuring that hard won gains are not overturned as soon as the UN leaves.

Ladies and gentlemen

Sustaining peace is a long and complex process given the unique and complex situations in every corner of the globe.

Looking to the Korean experience, inspiration can be drawn from the numerous hardships and challenges that the country has seen since the Korean War. In facing such adversity, Korea has risen like a fledgling phoenix from the ashes to find its place amongst the world’s leading nations. Adversity has strengthened, not weakened, this nation’s capacity to overcome trying moments and given Korea the strength to forge the essentials of peace in its own neighbourhood. Korea can meet the challenges of making peace and sustaining it. That is Korea’s destiny to contribute to achieving lasting peace in this region and beyond.

The world can learn from the Korean experience. For its part, Korea has the moral responsibility and material capacity to show the world that challenges can be overcome with confidence, determination, passion and compassion.

Thank you.