

First Committee of the 71th Session of the UN General Assembly

Thematic Debate on Other WMD

New York

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Mr. Chair,

1. Since their entry into force, both the BWC and CWC have served as the core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and continuously moved towards their universalization. As the first treaty to put a comprehensive ban on certain type of weapons of mass destruction, the BWC stands as an important landmark in the history of international disarmament efforts. The Republic of Korea firmly believes, as aptly stated in the Convention's preamble, that any use of biological weapons is not only a matter of international law but also a matter of conscience of mankind.
2. However, the BWC still faces unique challenges with rapid advances in biotechnology and life sciences as well as their wide availability and inherently dual-use nature. It is our sincere hope that we could take a full advantage of this occasion to take a pragmatic and realistic step forward in reinforcing the BWC to adapt itself to meet the emerging challenges in the run up to the 8th BWC Review Conference.
3. The Republic of Korea has been consistent in its support for strengthening the BWC regime and thorough preparation for the 8th Review Conference. In light of the nexus between emerging technology and WMDs, we share the

view that the establishment of a more structured and sustainable Science and Technology review process is needed to introduce a more current and relevant technical foundation to the Convention. Given that a large number of working papers have been put forward to this respect, we hope that the Review Conference could come up with a consensual decision to strengthen the S&T review process in the framework of the future inter-sessional program.

4. Furthermore, it is our view that each State Party's robust implementation of the obligations under the Convention is of vital importance in ensuring the effectiveness of the regime. This should be complemented with strong CBMs(confidence building measures) among the State Parties and international assistance for capacity-building as ArticlesV and VII of the Convention envisage. In this connection, the Republic of Korea has co-sponsored the working paper titled 'step-by-step approach in CBM participation', which proposed practical measures to enhance the level of participation in the CBMs.

5. The Republic of Korea is also actively participating in the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) as one of the steering group members for the multi-sectorial rapid response action package. It is our belief that ensuring such practice of experience-sharing will facilitate cooperation and assistance for capacity building.

6. The BWC underpins our collective effort to counter the weaponization of biological agents by state or non-state actors. We would like to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the Convention and to the success of the 2016 Review Conference.

7. Since the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force less than 20 years ago, the CWC and the OPCW have played a pivotal role in the global community's unwavering efforts to make the world free of chemical weapons. As Myanmar and Angola became Parties in 2015, the CWC now has 192 States Parties and is the most widely accepted of the international treaties related to disarmament. 93% of all declared chemical weapons by the States have been destroyed. The Republic of Korea commends the intensive efforts by the OPCW to universalize the Convention and destroy the declared chemical weapons.

8. In spite of these achievements, however, the OPCW and the international community have many daunting tasks ahead. Four countries including the DPRK are still outside the Convention. There has been growing concern over the possibility of chemical terrorism by non-State Actors. Most of all, the use of chemical weapons by a State Party to the CWC is the most serious problem to be tackled by the international community.

9. According to the report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) submitted to the UN Security Council on 24th August, 2016, there is

sufficient information that the Syrian Armed Forces were responsible for chemical weapons use in two cases (one in 2014 and one in 2015). There were also allegations that chemical weapons were used as recently as September this year.

10. The Republic of Korea is gravely concerned over these developments. We strongly urge the Syrian Government, which acceded to the CWC in 2013, to comply with the CWC as well as the UN Security Council resolution 2118, stop further use of chemical weapons in the future, and fully cooperate with the OPCW and the UN in their efforts to rid of its still remaining chemical weapons. /END/