2024 Session of the Conference on Disarmament

Statement by H.E. Ambassador YOON Seongmee

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Thank you Mr. President. Good morning colleagues. Let me begin by wishing everybody a happy, healthy and successful new year and by welcoming our new colleagues and congratulating Ambassador Ray on assuming the first CD presidency of this year. My team and I look forward to cooperating with you and your team as well as the other P6 members in the months ahead.

Looking back, we owe a great deal to the last year’s Presidents for aptly navigating the CD in the midst of geopolitical challenges exacerbated by the prolonged Russian invasion of Ukraine. My delegation appreciates their efforts to keep this body up-to-date by hosting thematic debates on novel and emerging issues as well as sustaining the much needed revitalization initiatives. Our Hungarian President salvaged the CD annual report which had shrunk to a one-pager the previous year and also revived the consensus tradition for our CD resolution at the UN First Committee.

Small as it may seem, this combination of will and dedication, compromise and consensus-building, sense of urgency and flexibility of not only the Presidents but of the whole membership is what is needed to overcome the decades-old deadlock in the CD. While this body cannot operate in a vacuum, we should nonetheless make sustained efforts to identify and work on the areas where progress is necessary and possible. This effort should not be one-off and it requires our joint efforts.
As such, as we discuss this year’s work program, my delegation expresses its support to proposals aimed at ensuring continuity in our work by, for instance, introducing renewable or multi-year POWs and subsidiary bodies to enable progressive consensus on various agenda items rather than simply repeating entrenched national positions. This time each year, we find ourselves pushing the rock of Sisyphus but we really need not start from the scratch every time.

Pending substantive progress in our negotiations, we should seek practical risk reduction measures relevant to our CD agenda items. Enhancing transparency in terms of nuclear doctrines and policies as well as nuclear stockpiles would be important in this regard. Other key steps include the declaration and observance of moratoria on nuclear testing and fissile material production for nuclear weapons by all states, especially by all Nuclear Weapon States.

In the same connection, we look forward to the resumption of full implementation of the New START treaty as well as negotiations on its successor arrangement between the largest nuclear powers. We also look forward to the continuation of the much welcomed resumption of high-level bilateral exchanges between the U.S. and China to promote strategic stability and risk reduction and hope that it will lead to tangible and meaningful results.

On our part, we remain open to dialogue with the DPRK to realize the complete denuclearization of the DPRK. DPRK’s provocative actions such as firing hundreds of artillery shells near the islands along the maritime border since the beginning of the year, launching countless ballistic missiles in violation of Security Council resolutions, and threatening preemptive nuclear strikes or further nuclear testing are far from conducive in this regard.
Furthermore, as was made clear in the ministerial joint statement by 50 states and the EU this month, the DPRK’s export of ballistic missiles is not only flagrant violations of UNSCRs of all the parties involved but has security implications on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

Mr. President,

With these initial remarks, my delegation reiterates its readiness to continue its constructive participation in the CD discussions in the coming months. It is our sincere hope to contribute towards restoring the relevance of this crucial body and delivering meaningful outcomes. In doing so, my delegation will undertake every effort to embrace a spirit of genuine cooperation with corresponding flexibility. Thank you. /END/