

**Statement by H.E Joonkook Hwang, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations**

**First Committee of the 77th Session of the General Assembly / General Debate**

**New York, October 4, 2022**

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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset, I would like to join the other delegations in congratulating Ambassador Mohan Pieris on assuming the Chair of the First Committee during the 77th Session of the General Assembly. On behalf of the Republic of Korea's delegation, I assure you and the new members of the Bureau of our full support.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation strongly believes in the value of the rules-based international order. We, as a Member State of the august body, share the responsibility of upholding universal values, restoring global order, and proving the role of the United Nations in addressing the global challenges we face that cannot be solved by a single nation.

Today's global security environment is more precarious and complex than it has ever been since the end of the Cold War. We are living in an era of uncertainty and upheaval. The solidarity of the international community and the core values of the UN Charter are being tested on a daily basis. Pressures and threats come from both conventional and unconventional security dimensions. For example, the

integrity of the rules-based order and national sovereignty is seriously impaired by the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustifiable attack on Ukraine.

Against this troubling backdrop, it is truly regrettable that we failed to reach a consensus during the **10th NPT Review Conference** held in August. However, the Non-Proliferation Treaty must stand strong as the fundamental cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. My delegation aligns with other countries in reiterating that the "failure to reach consensus does not mean failure of the Treaty itself." Throughout the Conference, Member States constructively engaged in productive negotiations and even managed to agree on many areas of utmost importance, including the text regarding the DPRK.

Mr. Chair,

It is unbearably frustrating that the threat and possibility of use of nuclear weapons are looming larger than ever. A country with the largest nuclear arsenal, the Russian Federation, is threatening to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon state. We join the urgent call on Russia to assume their due responsibilities as the nuclear weapon state and translate this years' P5 Leaders' Joint Statement into actions. We also urge Russia to immediately cease all military actions, withdraw all its forces from the Ukrainian territory and to comply with its obligations under international law.

Another country, the DPRK, which has developed its nuclear and missile capabilities in defiance of numerous UN Security Council resolutions, has recently passed a law that sets the threshold for using nuclear weapons far lower than any other country in the world. This policy even allows preemptive strikes or the use of nuclear weapons on a dangerously arbitrary basis. In addition, the DPRK fired yet another **IRBM** on just yesterday, amounting to a record total of 39 ballistic missiles this year alone. The Republic of Korea condemns in the strongest terms the DPRK's continued nuclear and missile activities in flagrant violation of the UN Security Council resolutions. We are deeply concerned about the unprecedented level of paranoid aggressiveness in the DPRK's recent pattern of behavior.

The DPRK now seems all but ready to conduct its seventh nuclear test which will critically undermine the fundamental credibility of the international non-proliferation regime. Moreover, how we address the DPRK issue at the UN Security Council will not only serve as a message to the DPRK but will be a litmus test on the viability and relevance of the Security Council. As such, we urge all Member States and the Members of the Security in particular to join us in sending an unequivocally stern message to the DPRK to choose different path. We also call on the DPRK to immediately return to dialogue and respond positively to our 'Audacious Initiative,' which proposes corresponding economic, political, and military measures once the DPRK embarks on a genuine and substantive process for denuclearization.

Mr. Chair,

We are gathered here today in the First Committee, the preeminent platform to develop norms and build consensus in the pursuit of collective security and peace. This year, the Committee must strive to fulfill its mandate with an overwhelming sense of responsibility. The Republic of Korea will undertake every effort to constructively contribute to the critical work of the First Committee and its clusters.

As a country with an unwavering commitment to achieve the shared vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, my delegation would like to highlight the long-lingering issues of the commencement of **FMCT** negotiations and the entry into force of the **CTBT**. We call upon all Member States to revitalize relevant efforts and take a concrete and step-by-step approach towards nuclear disarmament. In this respect, we note the significant role of the **Stockholm Initiative** and the **International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament**. We also reaffirm our full support in ‘**Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament**’ as one of the Co-Chairs.

As witnessed in the war in Ukraine, the threats posed by conventional weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) should not be underestimated. Accordingly, the Republic of Korea remains committed to the framework of the **CCW** and **ATT**. For the ATT, the Republic of Korea recently assumed the Presidency of its ninth Conference of States Parties.

We also reiterate our support for the norms against using biological and chemical weapons. With this in mind, we believe that the upcoming Review Conference of the **BWC** in Geneva this November, and the Review Conference of the **CWC** next year will provide added momentum for the State Parties to reaffirm their commitment to the Treaties and their implementation. The Republic of Korea will work together to achieve tangible outcomes from these Review Conferences.

Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to ensuring a safe, secure, and sustainable space environment for all. In this vein, we welcome the ongoing OEWG process as an important opportunity to find common ground on identifying responsible behaviors to reduce space threats. We view that deliberate destruction of space objects which creates long-lived space debris, thus hampering peaceful use of space is one of the most pressing threats. Today, the Republic of Korea commits not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing following the U.S.'s announcement in April. We call on other States to join the relay of this commitment.

As one of the most digitally wired nations, as well as one under persistent threat from malicious cyber activities, we firmly believe in the importance of an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyberspace. My delegation acknowledges the critical role of the OEWG and GGE in developing responsible state behaviors in the use of

information and communications technology, including the applicability of international law in cyberspace.

Mr. Chair,

Although this year the First Committee is taking place in a particularly challenging security environment, we must not let history slide backward by idly watching our universal values break apart. We hope that in the First Committee we can lead the way to embrace multilateralism and the rules-based order to achieve collective security and peace. The Republic of Korea is ready to engage constructively throughout the process.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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