Statement by H.E. Ambassador Kim In-chul
Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament

at the First Committee of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly
Thematic Debate on Disarmament Machinery
October 25, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea is strongly committed to multilateral disarmament efforts through the current disarmament machinery that would create the conditions for a safer and more secure world. Yet it is true that many years of stalemate in the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) have affected our expectations and approaches. It will be worthwhile to note that this year, we witnessed positive signs amid long standing stalemate.

This April, the UNDC adopted by consensus the Recommendations on Practical Confidence-Building Measures in the field of conventional weapons. The first since 1999. A welcome valuable achievement which was made possible through joint efforts by all Member States and which shows that agreement is possible on long protracted issues. This can-do spirit is what is important.
The Republic of Korea looks forward to discussing with renewed impetus at the UNDC from next year new agenda items such as *Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities*. We also hope to see the positive momentum created by the UNDC continuing into other multilateral disarmament fora and onto the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. During the 2017 session, the Conference agreed to establish a working group on the *Way Ahead* to “take stock of the progress made thus far, identify issues for substantive work, identify common grounds for a programme of work with a negotiating mandate, and consider steps for the way ahead”. In fact, the mandate of the working group fully encompassed and, thus, showed that we are all well aware of the groundwork that needs to be done for re-starting negotiations.

Yet despite extensive efforts, in particular, by the chair and the facilitators, we do not have agreed recommendations from the working group. This leads us to feel that an artificial dichotomy separating pre-negotiation work from actual negotiations does not contribute to the effective and efficient work of the CD. It will be up to the members of the CD, including ourselves, to learn from past failings and to build upon its past achievements.

Whereas the long stalemate calls for redoubling our best efforts for cooperation and collective political will, it is regrettable that, for the first time in the history of the CD, and probably in UN, Member States were bereft of the opportunity to put forth their views and discuss a programme of work, that has to be drawn up and presented by the President. Four
weeks taken away from the Conference is a serious issue and it shall not be repeated.

My delegation sincerely hopes that all CD Member States can immediately start to inject renewed impetus into the work of the CD. This is the only way that the CD can meet the international community’s expectations, fulfill its long-waiting mandate and prove once again its relevance to the disarmament machinery.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  /END/