Statement

by

Counsellor KIM, Yong-ho

Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament

at

The Second Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

- Nuclear Weapon Free Zone -

May 5, 2008
Geneva
Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea acknowledges the important role of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as a reasonable and reliable means to achieve an ultimate goal of global denuclearization through regional and step-by-step- approach. It also contributes to enhancing global and regional peace and security by diminishing threat perceptions held by the countries within the Zone through elimination of nuclear presence in the Zone and offering negative security assurances, and thereby reducing incentives to possess nuclear weapons.

We see it as an effective and practical way to reinforce and complement the current NPT regime. As a mechanism to limit the availability of nuclear weapons, Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone has been and will remain a useful tool not only for non-proliferation, but also for disarmament in the longer term. In this sense, we welcome the conclusion of the “Treaty on Nuclear-weapon-free Zone in Central Asia” in September 2006 and want to see its early entry into force.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea continues to support the guidelines and principles on the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones which were adopted by consensus at the 1999 session of the UN Disarmament Commission. We believe that any Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by States in the regions concerned. A Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaty needs to take into full account the specific characteristics of the States Parties in question, including their security situations and pre-existing security arrangements. The general principles of international law, the freedom of the high seas, the right of innocent passage, and individual and collective rights of self-defense should be equally and duly respected within all Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. The geographical scope of the Zone should also be clearly defined.
To ensure the effective implementation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaty, a credible verification mechanism should be established. Among other things, the cooperation of nuclear weapon states is essential in maintaining the integrity and viability of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. In this regard, nuclear weapons states are requested to conclude protocols that provide negative security assurances to the States Parties of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaties, provided those States Parties have acceded to, and in full compliance with, the NPT and its relevant implementation regime, including safeguards agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

On the Korean Peninsula, the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, signed by South and North Korea on 20 January 1992, was an innovative initiative similar to a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone. It is our sincere hope that through the faithful and expeditious implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement, as well as the October 3 Agreement produced at the Six-Party Talks, the two Koreas will in the near future achieve the goals of the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.