

**Remarks by  
H.E. CHOI Jong Kun  
1st Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea**

**Conference on Disarmament  
22-24 February 2021**

Mr. President,  
Madame Secretary-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

It is my great pleasure and privilege to address the Conference on Disarmament. But I am also humbled as we meet at a very compelling moment for the very future of global disarmament.

This compelling moment is characterized by an erosion of consensus and deadlock in the disarmament community. Non-traditional security challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping across the globe even as we speak threatens to change our way of life. If the collective wisdom of humanity underpinned by multilateralism fails to rein in the black elephant today, it will come back with a very high price tag tomorrow. This is the reason we have gathered here to revisit a subject as complex as the arms control architecture. As a matter of fact, we stand at a critical juncture.

Meanwhile, the extension of the New START Treaty earlier this month speaks to the fact that we can remain optimistic, given that our ideals of arms control have been revived. The Republic of Korea therefore welcomes this latest feat by the Governments of the United States and Russia.

As a nation striving to achieve complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, we hope that such positive development will also bring fresh momentum for our joint endeavors to address ongoing disarmament and non-proliferation issues across the board including peace-building on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

Mr. President,

As we prepare for the 10th NPT Review Conference this August and look ahead to the Treaty's next fifty years, my Government naturally joins others in calling upon those relevant states to engage in genuine dialogue to move us forward in achieving our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons in accordance with the NPT.

Bearing in mind that the global disarmament architecture is only as durable as the commitment of its constituents, the Republic of Korea for its part has actively engaged in collective efforts such as through the Stockholm Initiative on nuclear disarmament. The consensus resolution at the UN General Assembly on "Youth, Disarmament and Non-proliferation" is another contribution that the ROK will continue to lead to secure the sustainability of our efforts well into the future.

And it goes without saying that the CD needs to do its part as well – it has to regain its credibility as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. My Government welcomes the initiative put forth by this year's six Presidents – the P6 – to bring the CD back to its proper place. We call on Member States to take a practical, flexible and realistic approach to advance substantive discussions on key deliverables including the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

Mr. President,

As a country that is not free from the threat of war, the Republic of Korea has exerted substantive efforts to transform this daily threat into everyday peace. Indeed, the Korean Peninsula Peace Process is our enduring commitment to achieve complete denuclearization and establish permanent peace in our part of the world. We have tirelessly and without hesitation initiated diplomatic ventures engaging the DPRK along with the United States and other relevant parties. The September 19 Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA) sealed between the two Koreas in 2018, basic as it may be, offers operational arms control, thereby reconstructing the DMZ into a relatively stable buffer zone and serving as an enabler for relevant actors to concentrate on advancing denuclearization process.

We have chosen this route not because we want to, but because we have to. Building upon the hard-won momentum thus far, we will continue to work with our friends and partners to achieve our shared goal of complete denuclearization through peaceful means. In the same vein, we ask the DPRK to respond to our call for the resumption of dialogue. In the course, we count on the unwavering support of the international community.

Mr. President, Madame Secretary-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

In closing, allow me to reaffirm once again that the Republic of Korea stands ready to work with all Member States committed to overcoming the long standstill and polarization. The CD is entrusted with the solemn mission of promoting international peace and security as the cradle of multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements. And we all know that a mission complete is solely up to our political will. Let us move forward.

Thank you. /END/