

THE REPUBLIC OF

KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION
1 Avenue de l'Ariana, 1202 Genève

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Statement by

H.E. Mr. CHANG Dong-hee
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea

at

the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties
to the Biological Weapons Convention

Geneva
20 November, 2006

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this important meeting of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). I am confident that your rich diplomatic experience and your distinguished leadership will contribute greatly to a successful conclusion of this meeting. My congratulations also go to the other Bureau members on their election and to the Secretary-General of the Conference. Let me assure you, Mr. President and members of the bureau, of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the course of our deliberations.

Mr. President,

Since it came into effect in 1975, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) remains the fundamental legal and normative foundation of our collective endeavors to prevent and prohibit the use of biological and toxic weapons. However, advances in biotechnology and life sciences and their widespread availability have increased the possibility that proliferators, both state and non-state, may take advantage of loopholes inherent in the BWC. In light of the potential threats posed by these new developments, the BWC needs to be reinforced if it is to adequately address these new challenges while still enabling us to fully harvest the benefits of biotechnology for peaceful purposes.

Mr. President,

Against this backdrop, my delegation attaches particular importance to this Review Conference. Following the disappointing result of the last Review Conference in 2001, this year's Review Conference provides us with an excellent opportunity not only to assess how the Convention in its entirety has been operating for the last ten years, but also to cultivate the political will necessary to strengthen the Convention.

Through a comprehensive article by article review of the Convention, we should reaffirm and further elaborate upon our current understanding of the provisions of the Convention in the light of new scientific and

technological developments. Furthermore, we should also identify the areas in which additional work and cooperation among member states are needed, explore ways to ensure full implementation and discuss how to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention. In this regard, we view the vast array of working papers submitted by member states as an encouraging sign of the willingness of the States Parties to make this Review Conference a success.

Mr. President,

National implementation, universal adherence and the continuation of an inter-sessional work, among others, are critical components of our collective efforts to strengthen the Convention. Having said that, I will now briefly highlight my delegation's views on these issues.

First, the Republic of Korea places a high priority on national implementation of the Convention. We believe that enactment and effective enforcement of appropriate national legislative measures are our core obligations under the Convention to prohibit and prevent the development, production, acquisition, transfer, retention, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. Penal legislation, tightened national export controls and regulations on bio-safety and bio-security are essential elements for enhancing national implementation mechanisms. In addition, raising public awareness through education on the inherent dangers of biological weapons, and development and promulgation of a code of conduct for scientists would also be conducive to creating a favorable domestic environment for effective national implementation.

Second, we cannot overemphasize importance of universal adherence to the Convention. The limited membership to the Convention not only undermines security of States Parties but also erodes confidence in the Convention itself. Achieving universal adherence to the Convention is a practical way to further strengthen the Convention. As a contribution to discussions on the issue, the Republic of Korea has submitted a working document on the 'Universality of the BWC(BWC/CONF.VI.WP.19)'.

This working paper elaborates on the perceived lack of benefits in

terms of security guarantees and economic incentives and suggests possible options to promote universality. Reinforcing security guarantees through increased transparency, technical assistance in capacity building, and drawing up an Action Plan with specific targets and deadlines are part of the strategy to secure universality of the Convention. In this regard, we believe that the promotion of universality will be fostered by continuous discussions during the inter-sessional period and we sincerely hope that we will reach a common understanding on this issue at this Review Conference.

Third, the inter-sessional process initiated by the last Review Conference has created a positive momentum that can and should be carried forward. Our discussions over the past three years are a testimony of the value of this work, which we believe should continue beyond the Sixth Review Conference. Indeed, it would be even more constructive for the inter-sessional work to be conducted on a more regular and formal basis. Proceeding in this way would ensure greater continuity and coherence between Review Conferences.

Mr. President,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to reconfirm the unwavering commitment of the Republic of Korea to the letter and spirit of the Convention. Since its accession to the Convention in 1987, the Republic of Korea has been faithfully implementing its obligations and duties through enacting domestic laws and regulations and introducing a national export control regime. We are also actively participating in international exchanges of scientific and technological information related to the use of bacteriological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, and providing assistance to countries in need of health and disease control and education.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude my statement by expressing my sincere wish that we will be able to produce meaningful and tangible result at this Review Conference through collective flexibility and openness.

Thank you, Mr. President.