



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Song Min-soon
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

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Mr. President,

I would like to offer my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that under your distinguished leadership, we will achieve great results during this important session. I take this opportunity to assure you of the Republic of Korea's full support for your noble endeavours.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, for his excellent service during the first year in office. Based on long experience of working closely with him, His Excellency Roh Moo-hyun, President of the Republic of Korea, and I have every confidence that he will continue to fulfil his role with distinction.

Mr. President,

Today's global challenges require a collective response. Ever-widening globalization has brought with it a growing role for the United Nations. By virtue of its universality, the UN is the right body to deal with these global issues. No other organization can provide the legitimacy and authority that the United Nations offers.

The UN has played an indispensable role in setting international norms and principles. It has pointed States and peoples in the right direction. By enhancing predictability and rule-based interaction between and among nations, the UN is able to prevent conflicts of interest from erupting into crises. These are the quiet successes of the United Nations that often go unnoticed, precisely because the Organization helps to keep the international system running smoothly. This aspect of the United Nations' work deserves full recognition and should be further strengthened.

At the same time, the United Nations can do better. We should persist in our efforts to strengthen the world body through reform. This will be essential in enabling the UN to respond effectively to the most daunting challenges of our era. As steps towards achieving this end, the Government of the Republic of Korea fully supports the important initiatives the Secretary-General has taken to promote the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the Secretariat. In particular, we appreciate his strenuous efforts to lead by example in changing the Secretariat's working culture.

Mr. President,

Development, human rights, and peace and security are the three pillars of the United Nations. They are all imperatives, and they are mutually reinforcing.

Let me begin with development. The Millennium Development Goals, agreed by our leaders in 2000, have a target year of 2015. We are already at the midpoint. It is essential that we assess the current situation and renew our commitment. But these actions will not be enough on their own. We need to identify more effective means to fulfil these commitments.

The Republic of Korea has been redoubling efforts to enhance its official development assistance (ODA). We have committed to a threefold increase by 2015 from our current ODA level. To further support the international effort to eradicate poverty, we have joined the "air-ticket solidarity levy" initiative, an innovative source of financing for development. At the same time, drawing lessons from our own history of development, we place emphasis not only on increasing the scale of our aid, but also on effectively sharing our experience with developing countries.

An issue closely related to development is climate change. There is a growing consensus that climate change is placing serious constraints on worldwide development capacity. It affects everyone everywhere. Therefore it must be urgently addressed. I hope that the political will, shown by the leaders of more than 150 nations at Monday's gathering here, leads to the adoption of a roadmap to a post-2012 regime of realistic, tangible solutions to this pressing concern.

Turning to human rights, it is vital that the Human Rights Council live up to the high expectations that surrounded its creation. We must do all we can to enable the Council to make real progress in the promotion of human rights. Let us renew our commitment and strengthen our joint efforts to ensure its success. As an inaugural member of the Council, the Republic of Korea is fully committed to the principle of “all human rights for all.”

In this regard, my Government is deeply concerned about the current situation in Myanmar and the loss of civilian lives during the continuing protests. We strongly hope that the government and people of Myanmar will work together peacefully towards democratization and national reconciliation.

My Government has substantially increased its efforts to eliminate discrimination against vulnerable groups such as women, children and persons with disabilities. We have vigorously pushed for necessary legislation and the improvement of institutional frameworks to protect and promote the rights of such individuals. We also adopted a National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in May this year.

In the area of peace and security, UN peacekeeping missions are continuing to grow in importance, as well as in the size and scope of their activities. The strengthened UNIFIL mission in southern Lebanon and the deployment of the joint UN-African Union mission in Darfur are two prominent examples. Indeed, the rising demand for peacekeeping and the broad support of the international community are clear evidence of the UN’s crucial role in maintaining peace and security. For our part, the Republic of Korea’s recent participation in UNIFIL testifies once again to our firm commitment to the UN’s peacekeeping activities. We will make every effort to enable our well-trained and disciplined Korean contingents to contribute further to the peacekeeping activities.

Peace cannot be sustained without development. A comprehensive approach is required in order to make the fragile peace of post-conflict situations durable and irreversible. With the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the critical task of consolidating peace and development has been institutionalized. In this regard, I believe that the experience of the Republic of Korea for the last half century in rebuilding the nation from the ashes of war could provide useful insights and encouragements that might help the UN’s post-conflict peacebuilding activities.

Terrorism continues to be one of the gravest challenges of our times. The Republic of Korea strongly condemns terrorism in all forms, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes. We fully support the ongoing global anti-terrorism efforts. The Republic of Korea is party to 12 existing anti-terrorism conventions, while being in the process of ratifying the latest

International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We also view that the United Nations should lose no more time in concluding a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

Mr. President,

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their delivery systems pose an ever increasing threat to the international community. To curb WMD proliferation, our highest priority must be to restore the integrity and relevance of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In fact, the NPT regime is at a crossroads. It has faced unprecedented challenges in recent years. In responding to these challenges, we need to pool our wisdom to strengthen the current nuclear non-proliferation regime. The inherent deficiencies in the NPT should be remedied, and effective multilateral tools should be further developed to better serve the purposes of both nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. As home to the world's sixth-largest civil nuclear energy industry, the Republic of Korea regards the peaceful use of nuclear energy as crucial to our sustainable energy supply and economic development. This is all the more reason why we support strengthened safeguards against possible proliferation as a guarantor for the expanded use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Among the proliferation challenges facing the international community, the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) requires our immediate attention. This problem, if not resolved soon, will seriously undermine the NPT regime. It also has significant implications for peace and security in Northeast Asia and beyond.

The Six-Party Talks are the main vehicle through which to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue. This process has made significant progress since its launch in 2003. In the Joint Statement of September 2005, the six nations agreed on a blueprint for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The Initial Actions Agreement of February this year took that consensus forward another step, laying out the specific actions to implement the Joint Statement. We hope that another agreement will be reached during the new round of the Six-Party Talks now underway in Beijing, leading to the disabling of the DPRK's nuclear facilities.

On the Korean Peninsula, inter-Korean relations will be taken to a higher level with the Summit Meeting to be held in Pyongyang next week between President Roh Moo-hyun and Chairman Kim Jong-il. The Summit will first of all aim at consolidating peace on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK will be encouraged to move forward on the path to denuclearization. In the same vein, the leaders will explore ways to increase mutual trust through political and military confidence-

building measures, as well as ways to lay the groundwork for an eventual Inter-Korean Economic Community.

With progress in the denuclearization process, a new peace regime will be established on the Korean Peninsula to replace the half-century old armistice. The deepening of inter-Korean relations and the improvement of ties between the DPRK and other countries concerned will warrant such a change.

The resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue will thus have a ripple effect, extending its benefits well beyond the Korean Peninsula. The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula will strengthen the NPT regime, serving as a useful example of a negotiated solution for similar problems in other parts of the world including those in the Middle East. A peace process on the Korean Peninsula will open the path to a regional security dialogue, and the resultant improvement in Northeast Asian security will further strengthen regional and global cooperation for peace and prosperity. This may be an optimistic view. But it is important that we see not only the threats and challenges in our world, but also the opportunities. With the ongoing Six-Party Talks and next week's Inter-Korean Summit, we see a real opportunity for change. And we hope that our partners in this process will help us transform today's uncertainty into tomorrow's stability and prosperity.

Mr. President,

Our efforts in Northeast Asia are a testament to the importance of diplomacy and international cooperation, as exemplified by the United Nations. Even the most daunting challenges can be overcome when nations join forces to share the burden. For the Republic of Korea, this is a lesson we have learned through hard experience. Ever mindful of the days when we gratefully received the assistance and support of the international community for our very survival, we now try to help others, whether by working to strengthen regional security, participating in peacekeeping missions far from home, or sharing our resources and knowledge. These will be our modest contributions to the betterment of all humanity, the noble purpose embodied in the United Nations.

Thank you.