Statement of the Republic of Korea

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to the Austrian Government for organizing this important event ahead of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The Republic of Korea fully shares the international community's deep concern about catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, especially over the global and long-term effects of nuclear detonation on every aspect of our living including public health, environment, and socio-economic development. Such concerns are real to the Republic of Korea because it is living under continuous nuclear threats from the North.

The Republic of Korea also shares the international community's ultimate goal to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. President Park Geun-hye continues to stress that a world without nuclear weapons should start from the Korean Peninsula.

However, given the wide gap among States on how to achieve this shared vision, the international community needs to take a practical, realistic, and holistic approach, moving away from "all or nothing" thinking. In this regard, I would like to share our views on possible ways forward to avoid the risk of nuclear detonation and, in the long run, realize a world free of nuclear weapons.

First, though we acknowledge significant reduction of nuclear arsenals from their Cold War peak, further efforts should be made to make progress in nuclear disarmament. States with nuclear weapons should further cut their stockpiles of nuclear arsenals.

Second, it is imperative to further facilitate the early entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Republic of Korea calls upon the remaining eight Annex II States to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. In this regard, I would like to announce that the ROK Government will be hosting a CTBT Group of Eminent Persons meeting (GEM) in the summer of 2015.

We also strongly support the immediate commencement of negotiations on the Fissile
Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). To this end, we believe that the role of the UN GGE on FMCT will be crucial.

Third, non-proliferation and disarmament must be pursued simultaneously since they are mutually reinforcing. The persistent pursuit of nuclear weapons by North Korea becomes a serious threat to peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and beyond. In this regard, we urge North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in accordance with its obligations under all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and its commitments of the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks.

Last but not least, it is necessary to proactively address proliferation to non-state actors including terrorists. In this vein, all States should develop and enforce appropriate legal and regulatory measures in accordance with UNSC resolution 1540. We would also like to point out that the Nuclear Security Summit has been playing a constructive role in building political momentum at the highest level for the global efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism.

To conclude, we expect that diverse perspectives on this important issue will be exchanged during this conference. Thank you.