



## **OPENING STATEMENT**

By

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**11th UN-ROK Joint Conference  
on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues**

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Ladies and gentlemen, excellencies, distinguished participants and guests. I welcome this opportunity to open this meeting and would like at the outset to extend my sincerest thanks to the Deputy Minister, Ambassador Bong-hyun KIM, and his colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea for their cooperation and support in organizing the conference.

Eleven years ago, the United Nations and the Republic of Korea jointly initiated the Jeju Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation. Last year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the “Jeju Process”. And today we embark upon the second decade of this important forum for dialogue and confidence building.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Korea for their longstanding support for multilateral approaches to achieving disarmament and non-proliferation goals. Special thanks go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for its dedicated and professional cooperation which makes this Conference possible. I find it difficult to imagine a nicer venue for such a gathering than here on Jeju Island – the "Island of Peace" renowned for its natural beauty and hospitality of its people.

As the new High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, I am honoured to open and participate in this Conference for the first time.

The Conference is well-known for providing a forum for interactive and frank discussions on challenging disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation issues at both the global and regional levels. I view these discussions as a fruitful means to identify and explore creative practical approaches for meeting these challenges. They also contribute to confidence-building in this very important region. As before, we have gathered this year a broad range of highly qualified participants, including relevant official practitioners from governments and inter-governmental organizations, as well as knowledgeable experts from policy institutes, academia and other civil society organizations.

The theme of this year's Conference is "Disarmament and Non-proliferation in Asia and

Beyond – Conventional Weapons and Missiles." After predominantly focusing on weapons of mass destruction— in particular nuclear weapons— for the past decade, our Conference will focus on issues of conventional weapons. This reflects the fact that challenges posed by illicit conventional arms are increasingly on the rise. In response, the international community has invested considerable effort in establishing frameworks to address these challenges. These include the UN Programme of Action on Combating the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Mine Ban Convention, the Additional Protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Cluster Munitions Convention as well as efforts to conclude an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

In spite of the disappointing outcome of the 2012 ATT Conference held at the United Nations earlier this year, the UN remains an indispensable central arena for pursuing a robust treaty. As stressed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the end of the Conference, "A strong treaty would rid the world of the appalling human cost of the poorly regulated international arms trade". The UN is thus fully supportive of an ATT that addresses all conventional arms, including their ammunition, and includes criteria on international humanitarian law and international human rights law. I am encouraged that the First Committee, building on the work already done, has recently adopted a resolution calling for the convening of a Final United Nations ATT Conference in March 2013.

The specific issue of missiles—which relates both to conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction—is a critically important subject in disarmament. Yet there is currently no well-defined consensus among Member States on how to move the missile agenda forward. As is apparent following the last report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles in 2008, it is vitally important to continue international efforts to address this increasingly complex issue in the interest of international peace and security. This requires further deliberation with an emphasis on existing and emerging areas of consensus. The UN stands ready to provide for a more structured and effective mechanism to build this consensus.

I note the work of the subscribing States of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, currently chaired by the Republic of Korea. I am encouraged by the

growing number of subscribers to the Code and the commitment of its signatories not to contribute to, support or assist any ballistic missile programme developed in violation of international norms and obligations. I welcome such initiatives because of their contributions to advancing the all-important cause of peace and security. I urge all States to work strenuously towards a consensus on missiles, which embodies the elements of a transparent, open and fully inclusive effort to prevent the proliferation of all missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction.

I should like to add a few words about the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. Since its relocation to Nepal in 2008, the Centre has strengthened its capacity to undertake regional activities related to disarmament, taking into account the specific circumstances and practical needs of States in the region. With its new Director in place— Ms. Sharon Riggle— the Centre will strengthen its promotion of regional dialogue and confidence building on disarmament, non-proliferation and security matters through several productive activities, including this annual Conference.

On behalf of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, I would like to thank all countries and organizations, in particular those from Asia and the Pacific, for their financial and in-kind support and assistance to the Regional Centre. I urge them all to continue this support through funding as well as by partnering with the Centre on practical initiatives. This cooperation will enable the Centre to carry out its mandate effectively, while enhancing its ability to serve the interests of all States in this vital region.

With these words, I now open the Conference and wish you all a very productive discussion.