

15th Anniversary for the United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Disarmament Conference

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The 15th United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues was held from 17-18 November 2016, on the Island of Jeju, Republic of Korea. As in each of the previous 14 years, this joint event was organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, through its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

The Conference was opened by Mr. Kim Won-soo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, with Ambassador Choi Jong-moon, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Republic of Korea, providing welcoming remarks.

Almost 40 experts and representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, policy institutes and academia participated. The Conference addressed the nuclear issue relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the implementation of related UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, the nexus between the security of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials and cyber security, and the issue of export control.

On the DPRK nuclear issue and the implementation of UNSC resolution 2270 (2016), the Conference benefited from robust discussions on the impact and effectiveness of UNSC sanctions and on how to move forward. One group of panelists noted that DPRK's nuclear tests and missile launches had reached an unprecedented level of intensity, and that this required a firm response, particularly through a further tightening and expansion of the

sanctions regime. To ensure the implementation of the sanctions, several participants underscored the relevance of awareness raising, international information sharing, sanctions on third-state individuals and entities violating the UNSC sanctions, and pressure on States assisting the DPRK in the commission of illicit acts. One participant suggested that a key to success was to identify sanctions with a direct financial impact on the DPRK's leadership.

Other panelists expressed the view that the DPRK had proven both able and willing to make significant advances in its nuclear weapons programme despite fierce international opposition, and that further sanctions, or other outside pressure, was unlikely to work. They suggested that focus should be on engaging the DPRK, including through unconditional talks with little press attention and in parallel to a reopening of the six-party talks. One panelist proposed a UN-administered coal-for-food programme, which would manage the DPRK's coal exports and the distribution of food to the DPRK's population.

As regards the nexus between CBRN security and cyber security, panelists agreed that cyber threats to CBRN facilities presented an emerging, significant and underestimated danger. Potential cyber attacks on CBRN sites, including industrial sites (nuclear power plants especially), were elaborated, as were possible cyber attacks in the realm of outer space, particularly on satellites. Among the challenges pointed out were cultural aspects, e.g. differences in the understanding of risks, and in the approaches and priorities between, inter alia, a nuclear plant's operational technology personnel and its information technology personnel, or between its safety and its security personnel. Outdated industrial control systems, many designed in the 1960s, posed technical challenges. The need for a comprehensive and holistic approach was emphasized. In that regard, the pursuit of a holistic approach to WMD/nuclear governance



was elaborated, as it could integrate nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, security, safety, and peaceful use of energy into one framework. Likewise, the relevance of including cyber, and even space, into CBRN security efforts was highlighted, as was the possibility of using UNSC resolution 1540 (2004) as the legal platform for this integrated approach. The key importance of security culture was thoroughly explained. Its relevance was further augmented by the high proportion of cyber crimes committed by insiders, and the notion that the “weakest link” in cyber security may be the human factor. One panelist recommended strengthening security governance on CBRN and cyber, e.g. through an international nuclear security convention containing security standards and review mechanisms. The potential consequences of bio-terrorism were also highlighted and, in that regard, the need for an adequate response system in case of such an attack, and a verification organization in relation to biological weapons.

On the issue of export control, the nature, workings, and challenges of four of the key export control regimes were presented and discussed: Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Australia Group (AG), Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). As regards the NSG, suggestions were made that it further customize its outreach efforts and provide the technical assistance that members needed most, as well as consider the participation of States not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Regarding the MTCR, the challenges discussed were dealing with intangible transfer of technology, as well as engaging industry, academia, and non-partner governments. The MTCR planned to conduct outreach activities in nine selected States, particularly in Southeast Asia. The WA planned, inter alia, to continue to explore emerging technologies. In relation to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), WA’s members were ready to share their experiences and expertise, and its secretariat would monitor how the WA may contribute to the international ATT cooperation. With regard to the AG, panelists pointed to the challenges of new technological developments, internet trade, intangible transfers of technology, the possibility of terrorism, and the recent use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria.

the export control regimes, particularly in relation to transit, transshipment, brokering and intangible transfer of technology, as well as on developing a common forum for sharing best practices, preparing consolidated control lists etc. While viewed as desirable, references were made to the challenge that each regime is governed by its own guidelines (incl. on confidentiality), has its own particular composition of State parties, and applies consensus rule. As an alternative, participants considered the possibilities of informal meetings between the regimes and informal contacts between their chairs.

Hosted by the Republic of Korea since 2002, the Conference series has become an important forum characterized by a candid and constructive exchange of views among Government officials, independent experts, scholars and civil society representatives on the challenges and solutions to key disarmament, proliferation, arms control and security issues, both international and in the Asia-Pacific region. Taking place for the 15th year, this joint endeavour is now one of the longest continuing disarmament conference series. The Conference is financed through voluntary contributions from the Government of the Republic of Korea.

A discussion evolved on the possibility of enhancing coordination and cooperation among

