

**General Statement of the Group of 21 delivered by the Democratic People's
Republic of Korea**

at the Conference on Disarmament Plenary Meeting on 31 July 2014

Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

At the outset, the Group congratulates you on the assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and expresses its appreciation for the open, transparent and efficient manner that you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference.

The Group also would like to extend its gratitude to the Presidents of the CD for the efforts they deployed last year as a contribution to allow the Conference to resume substantive work including negotiations at the earliest and end the long impasse.

Mr. President,

1. The Group of 21 would like to stress, once again, that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the First Special Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSODI) and emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the CD and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work including, inter alia, the negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The G-21 reaffirms its working papers submitted to the Conference in September 2013, namely CD/1959 on Nuclear Disarmament, CD/1960 on Negative Security Assurances and CD/1961 on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

2. Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The Group of 21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the CD, without further delay. As the highest priority, the CD should start negotiations on a phased program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time.

3. The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as Zone of Peace, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana on 28-29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament

4. The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms its related resolution A/RES/68/32 to follow up to this meeting. As the Secretary General of the UN rightly mentioned in the CD this year "The High-level Meeting of the

General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels". In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution in particular its call for urgent decision by the CD to commence negotiating nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group of 21 has made a separate statement in the CD Plenary on this issue. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a UN high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard.

5. The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) mandated by the UN General Assembly "to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons" and hopes that it would contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the CD, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. To this end, the Group welcomes UNGA Resolution A/RES/68/46, which recognizes that the OEWG engaged in an open, constructive, transparent and interactive manner to address various issues related to nuclear disarmament.

6. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear weapon States (NWS) and long standing requests by NNWS to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that NNWS implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear weapon States contrary to their obligations under the UN Charter.

7. The Group concurs with the UN Secretary General that there is growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the hosting of the Conferences on this subject, convened in Mexico 13-14 February this year, in Oslo last year, and also the initiative of Austria to host the third one.

8. In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate, and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment, and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. In this regard, the Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament, through an inclusive process involving all States.

Mr. President,

9. The Group of 21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The group takes note of various efforts to reach consensus on the CD's Program of Work including the Program of Work adopted on 29 May 2009 that was not implemented and all subsequent efforts and proposals for a program of work, including those tabled on 14 March 2012, 11 February, 21 June and 13

August 2013 that were not adopted, and the decision adopted in 2013 on the establishment of the Informal Working Group, with a mandate to produce a program of work and its reestablishment on 3 March 2014.

10. The Group reiterates the urgency that the CD should adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive Program of Work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus.

11. The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the UN disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercising political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

12. While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the UN disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for an early convening of the Fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-IV) and expresses its deep concern, over the fact that SSOD IV is yet to be convened.

13. The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and deeply regrets the delay of concrete actions to that end.

14. The State Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of the Nuclear Weapons (NPT) expresses their continued concern that one of the important decisions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, namely convening a Conference by the UN and sponsors of the 1995 NPT Review Conference Resolution on establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East in 2012, was not realized. The State Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT are disappointed that the following efforts to convene such conference in 2013 were also not successful. They stress that the agreed mandate of the conference as contained in 1995 NPT Extension and Review Conference Resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan should be maintained and constitute the basis for convening the Conference as well as its preparatory process. In this regard, they call upon the facilitator and co-conveners to hold the conference without any further delay in order to maintain the credibility and sustainability of the NPT Regime.

15. The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the CD.

16. The Group also recognizes the importance of engagement between civil society and the Conference of Disarmament, according to decisions taken by the Conference and continues to support the strengthening of the CD's interaction with civil society.