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**THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

**PROMOTING UNIVERSALITY OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

**Why does universality matter?**

1. The Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) is a landmark international treaty in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, which prescribes a global and verifiable ban on a whole category of chemical weapons. However, without universal adherence to the Convention, the ultimate goal of “a world free of chemical weapons” cannot be achieved. Furthermore, universality has gained increased urgency and importance to cope with the new global security environment marked by increasing threat of chemical terrorism and growing risk of vertical/horizontal proliferation of dangerous toxic chemicals.
2. At the same time, the concept of universality is broadening. The qualitative aspect of universality, i.e., full and effective implementation of the Convention, is considered as important as quantitative aspect in achieving the objectives of the Convention.
3. For the Republic of Korea, universality is an issue of vital importance and urgency. It is a source of serious concern that certain states, including North Korea, which are believed to possess chemical weapons capabilities, still remain outside of the Convention. North Korea’s joining in the Convention will greatly contribute to enhancing mutual confidence and security on the Korean peninsula as well as strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. This is one of the reasons why the Korean delegation has taken the initiative of adopting the annual “Recommendation on Ensuring the Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention” ever since the Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties in 1997.

**Progress made so far and tasks ahead**

4. The Convention has been currently ratified by 151 states. This seems to be a remarkable achievement towards universal adherence in terms of total number of States Parties. However, what is particularly worrisome is that there are still a number of States not Parties that are known to possess chemical weapons capabilities. This demands that we focus our attention on those states, since they pose a more immediate and real threat to regional stability and global peace and security.



5. The reasons for non-adherence to the Convention vary from state to state. Broadly speaking, States not Parties could be classified into two groups. The first group would be those states with security concerns for whatever reasons. They may wish to keep their options open to acquire chemical weapons capabilities until their security situation changes. This group could be called “malign or hard case”. The second group includes those states that have no immediate interest or need to join the Convention due to lack of awareness or financial and human resources. This group could be called “benign or soft case”.
6. Therefore, we have to first identify the reasons and obstacles certain states face in joining the Convention. Then, strategies to induce those States not Parties to join the Convention should be developed on a case-by-case basis. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work; country-specific or region-specific approaches must be developed.

### **Measures to promote universality**

7. With regard to concrete measures to promote universality, the following diplomatic approaches could be taken, either alone or in combination global approach, regional approach, targeted bilateral efforts, and efforts by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”).
8. The global and regional approach could best work for states in the region of tension. The international community and countries in the same or neighbouring regions could exercise persuasion or peer pressure by delivering a strong message to the state in question. In this regard, regional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) could play a pivotal role within or outside the region.
9. States Parties could also apply a bilateral approach by making high-level diplomatic demarches vis-à-vis States not Parties on which they have an influence. They could also contribute by hosting regional seminars on universality, and by assisting the implementation of the Convention by those states who lack financial resources and expertise. The Secretariat can also play a vital role by providing support in making necessary preparations to join the Convention and in implementing the Convention.
10. In this process, the possible benefits and advantages of joining the Convention could be highlighted, and at the same time the potential disadvantages of remaining outside of the Convention could be explained as well. The benefits may include, among others, an improvement of the security situation, a good reputation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and the promotion of economic and technical cooperation and trade.

### **Conclusions**

11. The Review Conference is a unique opportunity to evaluate the progress made so far in achieving universality of the Convention and to prepare a roadmap for further advancing towards this goal.

12. In this context, the Republic of Korea is of the view that the Political Declaration and relevant documents of the Review Conference must highlight the following elements:
  - (a) reaffirming the increased importance and urgency of achieving universality of the Convention;
  - (b) expressing concern about the continued absence of some States, and urging them to join the Convention without further delay;
  - (c) reaffirming the importance of ensuring qualitative universality for the full and effective implementation of the Convention; and
  - (d) reaffirming the commitment by all State Parties and the Secretariat to continue to make concerted efforts in this regard, by developing a medium-term plan of action, and further expanding cooperation with other international and regional organisations.
  
13. Finally, the Republic of Korea is of the view that the issue of ensuring universality should be dealt with in a more systematic and focused manner. For the smooth implementation of the medium-term plan, additional funding and human resources in the Secretariat might be also considered.

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