

OSCE Permanent Council
Hofburg, 27 May 2010

**Remarks by H.E. SHIM Yoon-joe
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea**

Response to the Sinking of ROK Ship "Cheonan"

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the case of a naval ship sinking that took place in territorial waters near the South-North Korean border two months ago, which might have significant implications for the security situation around the Korean Peninsula. I first addressed this subject at the OSCE Asian Contact Group Meeting on May 7th where I explained the preliminary conclusions of what was then an ongoing investigation. Today, I would like to brief you on the final outcome of the official investigation into the incident, which was made public on May 20th, and outline my Government's position on this matter.

As you may recall, on March 26th, the 1,200 ton Korean Navy corvette *Cheonan*, during a routine patrol in territorial waters near the South-North border, was destroyed by an explosion that took the lives of 46 sailors on board.

In response, the Korean Government established a multi-national Joint Investigation Group (JIG) for a thorough and scientific investigation comprised of 50 Korean and 24 international experts from the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Australia, which are participating States and Partners for Co-operation of the OSCE. Following approximately six weeks of investigation, the JIG announced on May 20th its conclusive findings, backed by definitive evidence, that the *Cheonan* was sunk by a North Korean torpedo attack. The investigation and validation process was transparent and inclusive, and the conclusions were evidence-based and scientifically valid. Since I do not wish to take up your time reiterating the

Group's conclusions, please refer to the relevant documentation that my delegation has distributed.

I would like to note that, after the announcement, many countries and international organizations, including NATO, EU, and ASEAN made statements condemning North Korea while expressing their confidence in the credibility of the findings of the investigation. In this regard, I would like to thank those states—including participating States—that have condemned the North's provocative acts and offered to cooperate with the Republic of Korea in resolving the security challenges thrown into stark relief by the *Cheonan* incident.

Mr. Chairman,

North Korea's provocation was a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and existing agreements reached for the sake of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, including the Korean War Armistice Agreement and the Basic Agreement between South and North Korea. This past Monday, May 24th, President Lee Myung-bak delivered a speech to the nation emphasizing that "through the *Cheonan* tragedy, we learned a painful lesson once again. We had been forgetting the reality that the nation faces the most belligerent regime in the world."

President Lee also outlined a three-part package of measures Korea will take to hold the North accountable for its heinous act of aggression. The first set of measures concerns inter-Korean relations. North Korean ships will no longer be permitted to enter our territorial waters. Inter-Korean trade and exchanges will be suspended, while humanitarian assistance for infants and children will continue. In addition, if there is any further intrusion into our territory, we will immediately exercise the right of self-defense. The second set comprises international measures, including referring this matter to the UN Security Council as a material violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a breach of peace. Lastly, President Lee has also directly urged North Korean authorities to apologize and punish those who are responsible for and were involved in the incident.

In spite of the overwhelming evidence, North Korea flatly denied its involvement and reacted to the aforementioned measures by threatening military action. Now is the time for the international community to send a clear, united and strong message to North Korea that its military provocation will never be tolerated in order to secure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

In this context, I strongly anticipate that the OSCE, as the world's largest security organization, will play a prominent role in the international efforts to achieve a stable security situation in the region—in particular those efforts to change the behavior of the North Korean regime.

Thank you for your attention.