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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Afonso	(Mozambique)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Ms. Koumby Missambo
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan	Mrs. Shino
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Republic of Korea to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Jenča.

Mr. Jenča: According to its official news agency, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted what it described as an intercontinental ballistic missile launching drill on 16 March. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced that the ballistic missile, which it designated as a Hwasong-17, flew a distance of 1,000 km and to an altitude of 6,045 km.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea also launched a short-range ballistic missile on Sunday, local time. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea characterized this launch as being part of a "drill simulating a nuclear counter-attack". This was the fourth event in 11 days in which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea carried out launches using ballistic missile technology. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has conducted a total of 14 launches of such systems in 2023.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea greatly increased its missile launch activities in 2022, including approximately 70 launches using ballistic missile technology. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea characterized these launches as involving systems with nuclear weapon roles, including so-called "tactical" nuclear weapons. Most of the systems it tested are capable of striking countries in the immediate region. The systems it tested on 16 March and 18 February, as well as on two occasions last year, are capable of

reaching most points on Earth. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea again did not issue airspace or maritime safety notifications. Unannounced launches represent a serious risk to international civil aviation and maritime traffic.

The Secretary-General strongly condemns the launch of yet another ballistic missile of intercontinental range by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as its other launches using ballistic missile technology.

The Secretary-General reiterates his calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately desist from taking any further destabilizing actions, to fully comply with its international obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions and to resume dialogue leading to sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is actively pursuing its nuclear weapons programme. In September 2022, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea approved a new law that set out conditions in which it could use nuclear weapons, including pre-emptively in certain circumstances. This nuclear doctrine was reiterated in the official newspaper of the Workers' Party of Korea, *Rodong Sinmun*, on 17 March.

The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported on 6 March that the Punggye-ri nuclear test site "remains prepared to support a nuclear test". The IAEA has continued to observe activity at the site. It has also observed construction activities at the Yongbyon nuclear facilities and indications that the 5-megawatt nuclear reactor was operating.

A seventh nuclear test would be a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions and undermine the international norm against nuclear testing. The Secretary-General remains firmly committed to achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

As per our earlier briefings to the Council, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to implement its five-year military plan unveiled during the eighth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, in January 2021. That plan provided for the development of new solid-propellant intercontinental-range ballistic missiles; multiple warheads; better warheads; tactical nuclear weapons; a military reconnaissance satellite; new unmanned aerial systems; a 15,000 km-range

intercontinental ballistic missile; and a hypersonic gliding-flight warhead.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has clearly stated its intention to continue pursuing its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. The situation on the Korean peninsula continues to head in the wrong direction. Tensions continue to increase, with no off-ramps in sight.

The Secretary-General remains deeply concerned over the divisions that have prevented the international community from acting on this matter, as well as on other threats to peace and security around the world. The Korean peninsula must be an area for cooperation. Today's meeting provides an opportunity to discuss practical measures for achieving a peaceful, comprehensive, diplomatic and political solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula. As previously stated, as the Council considers its options, there are several practical measures that could reduce tensions.

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must take immediate steps to resume dialogue leading to sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. This should include the Democratic People's Republic of Korea refraining from carrying out further launches using ballistic missile technology or nuclear tests.

Secondly, communication channels — in particular military-to-military channels — must be enhanced. Reducing confrontational rhetoric will help to lower political tensions and create space to explore diplomatic avenues.

Separately, I wish to highlight once more our concerns regarding the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United Nations is ready to assist the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in addressing medical and other basic needs of vulnerable populations. We reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow the unimpeded entry of international staff, including the Resident Coordinator, and of humanitarian supplies, to enable a timely and effective response.

Let me close by reiterating that the unity of the Security Council on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is essential to ease tensions and overcome the diplomatic impasse. The primary responsibility for international peace and security rests with the Council. The Secretariat is its partner in that effort.

The President: I thank Mr. Jenča for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for his informative briefing and recommendations to the Security Council and welcome the representative of the Republic of Korea to this meeting.

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launches on 15 March of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and on 18 March of short-range ballistic missiles. One month ago to the day (see S/PV.9264), we met here to discuss the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile. We called for Council unity in the face of the country's growing threat to international peace and security. One month later, it launched another ICBM, which it followed only days later with another ballistic-missile launch, once again in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. Those launches are not only threatening, destabilizing and unlawful, they allow the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to advance its development of more sophisticated and dangerous weapons. The irresponsible, unannounced launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also pose unacceptable risks to international aviation and maritime traffic.

I know that two members of the Council believe we should remain silent. But the Council's silence is not working. Hoping that the regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will stop of its own accord is not working. Month after month, those two members demand that we do the same thing and expect different results. Our silence in the face of the escalations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea weakens the Council's credibility, jeopardizes the global non-proliferation regime and emboldens the appetite of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to flout this organ's collective mandate. Not only is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea watching, but the world is watching. How can we remain silent?

A Security Council resolution is the appropriate reciprocal response for the launch of just one ICBM. That is not just my opinion. It used to be the consensus in the Council. The Council unanimously adopted resolutions in response to the first three ICBM launches by the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea. They not only sent a clear diplomatic message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all potential proliferators, but mandated concrete actions that successfully raised the cost for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to advance its unlawful programmes for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missiles.

Now, with the Council's current posture, we have seen 10 ICBM launches since the beginning of 2022. In response to the crisis, the United States has repeatedly proposed actions that the Council can take. We have made clear our earnest intentions to negotiate in good faith. And the vast majority of the Council has joined us in engagement and our commitment to diplomacy. But three Member States refused to engage in good-faith diplomacy over the threat — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which has continued to ignore our multiple offers for dialogue, and China and Russia, whose obstructionism of the Council is encouraging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to launch ballistic missiles with impunity. China and Russia will say that they are not defending the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but their actions speak louder than words. They will say that Council meetings and lawful defensive exercises are provocative. I will remind them that Council products are unifying statements and part of the Council's responsibility. They are not provocative actions and have in fact de-escalated missile launches in the past. And the unprecedented campaign of missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea started well before the United States and its allies restarted our long-standing defensive exercises.

Here is my question. How many times must the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violate its Security Council resolution obligations before China and Russia stop shielding its regime? How often must the Democratic People's Republic of Korea choose ammunition over nutrition? How many starving people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea does it take? What happens if a missile test fails in mid-flight and rains debris below? What happens if there is a nuclear test on China's doorstep? Please think about those questions. From my perspective, enough is enough. The United States implores Council members to return to the level of cooperation that used to exist regarding the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Council must send three messages to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all

proliferators. The first is that the Security Council and the international community condemn these actions as a clear threat to international peace and security. The second is that we reaffirm and must fully implement the resolutions we unanimously adopted. And the third is that it is time for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its unlawful WMD and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and instead engage in dialogue. The United States has proposed a draft presidential statement, the latest of the Council products that we have penned, to do just that, and I encourage everyone in this Chamber to join us in these messages towards peace.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for his briefing and his clear recommendations to the Security Council.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains defiant and determined to continue with the same escalatory policy of provocations that we saw last year. The new missile launches are another blatant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, and that irrational behaviour is unfortunate, deplorable and unacceptable. The reckless launches are a direct threat to maritime and aviation security, as we just heard from the Assistant Secretary-General, and such provocative actions endanger global peace and security. They put people's lives at risk and are increasing instability and insecurity on the entire Korean peninsula. We are in a situation in which the regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has made its choice. It is resolved to continue to defy the international community, disrespect international law and show contempt for the Security Council's decisions.

The real question here and outside this Chamber, and out there in public opinion, is what the Security Council is going to do. In our view, it must stand up, and in a united voice, make it clear to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that such a course of action is dangerous and unsustainable. It must use its authority and tools to prevent further dangerous escalations, which, if unaddressed, could lead to disastrous consequences for the region and the global community. There is one thing that we are absolutely certain about. The Security Council cannot remain idle. Its mandate is not to remain indifferent and its duty is not to remain silent. This is an acute matter of responsibility, as it is a serious matter of credibility. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot continue violating Security Council resolutions and the sanction's regime with

impunity, as it is doing, while pursuing its weapons of mass destruction and nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes, threatening its neighbours and the world.

Silencing the Council on this crucial issue means giving Kim Jong Un licence to do more of the same, and that is exactly what he is doing. We do not see winners there. There are none, apart from the regime and its reckless and dangerous policy. We strongly believe that the Security Council should stand up and collectively condemn the regime's violations of its resolutions and of the safeguards agreements under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The regime must be told in very clear terms that its continued efforts to threaten peace and security on the Korean peninsula and within the global community will not be tolerated. If that is not done, there is no reason for the regime to change course, as it says publicly. Albania therefore supports action and supports a Council product, and we stand ready to engage in whatever is most appropriate, including the presidential statement proposed by our United States colleague. We should stop sleepwalking on this critical issue and not wait for a catastrophe to wake us up.

Last Friday, the United States and Albania requested that an Arria Formula meeting be convened on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. And it was deeply distressing that the only news we heard coming out of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is about a military regime that is sacrificing its people with starvation, poverty, a lack of health services, slavery, violence, forced labour, enforced disappearances and extreme measures of deprivation. The people want food, while the regime is giving them more weapons, by spending insane amounts of money on its unlawful activities of weapons-of-mass-destruction, nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes.

We strongly believe in diplomacy and dialogue. This is our *raison d'être* in the Security Council. Although the regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not offered much in this regard, we still call on it to withdraw in a full, transparent, comprehensive and irreversible way from their weapons-of-mass-destruction, nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes and engage in a meaningful process of dialogue and diplomacy.

The Security Council can help in this regard, by standing united, speaking with one strong voice and sending a clear message: enough is enough.

But, in this case, enough is way too much. Any other attitude is a disservice to the Council, its role, peace and security on the peninsula and global security.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Jenča for his briefing.

In the past, each launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) led to condemnation by the Security Council and a call to respect its unanimously adopted resolutions. However, for more than a year and in the face of the increasing number of launches, we have remained divided and silent. I say this in all seriousness: inaction cannot become the norm on this issue.

Let us remember what is at stake: an ICBM such as the Hwasong-17 threatens the security of all Council members. It can strike all continents. It is capable of carrying the nuclear warheads that North Korea has and continues to produce. But the ICBM is only part of the problem. Short-range missiles, such as those fired yesterday, are mass-produced. The regime has announced its desire to continue firing them into the Pacific. Added to this is the unabashed nuclear rhetoric and the likely preparation for a seventh nuclear test.

Let us be clear, each of these provocations defies the authority of the Council and violates its resolutions. Our division provides North Korea with cover. The question before us is very simple: can the Security Council accept North Korea becoming a nuclear-weapon State? France will not resign itself to that because doing nothing today is to normalize nuclear proliferation. It is tantamount to accepting that tomorrow crises of proliferation will multiply elsewhere in the world.

In the face of these provocations, the priority is to resume dialogue without preconditions. Proposals to this effect have been made. It is up to the North Korean authorities to consider them, and the States of the region to encourage them.

Our objective remains unchanged: the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. The Security Council must enforce its own decisions. That is the minimum. To stop the escalation, all unanimously adopted international sanctions must be fully implemented and all forms of circumvention opposed.

These new provocations require a united and resolute response from the international community.

France will spare no effort to ensure that the Council lives up to its responsibilities.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča for his briefing.

It was only a month ago that we were in this Chamber to discuss the unlawful launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by North Korea that endangered vessels, exposed aircraft in the area to great risk and terrified Japanese citizens. It is my greatest regret that we must come to this Chamber again to discuss the same situation. Once again, North Korea has launched an ICBM towards us, which landed just 200 kilometres from Japan. North Korea also launched another ballistic missile on 19 March local time. Japan strongly condemns these unlawful and outrageous acts.

Let us recall what we have been working on. The very name of the agenda item makes it clear: we are in this Chamber to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. This is why the Security Council decided that North Korea shall abandon all nuclear-weapons programmes, and it is why the Security Council decided that North Korea shall not launch ballistic missiles or other means of delivery of nuclear weapons (resolution 1718 (2006)).

North Korea is in violation of the Security Council's resolutions. North Korea even publicly states its intention to exponentially increase its nuclear arsenal. The ICBM launched this time is also estimated to have the capability to hit all of Asia, all of Europe, all of North America, including New York, all of Africa and even part of South America. Indeed, North Korea has just publicly announced the launch on 19 March was a tactical nuclear-attack exercise. North Korea threatens Japan, the region and beyond with its nuclear arsenal and means of delivery.

Japan does not believe that the Security Council should allow North Korea to take the entire international community hostage; instead, the Security Council should prevent that. Let us not get ourselves bogged down in political rhetoric. This is not about finding a solution to a conflict on which the parties are on equal footing. It is about preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and standing against the threat they pose. I urge all Council members to join the call for nuclear non-proliferation and refuse to provide North Korea with a loophole.

Some people argue that we are trapped in a negative action-reaction cycle. This is simply not true. North Korea has continued to develop nuclear weapons and their means of delivery in accordance with its five-year military plan. We should not be deceived by the regime's attempts to justify its ambition to pursue nuclear weapons. We should be clear-eyed about this.

The only vicious circle in which all of us in this Chamber have been trapped is a negative action-inaction cycle. The Council has long failed to act in response to provocative actions by North Korea, and North Korea has taken advantage of the Council's silence and felt free to steadily proceed with its unlawful weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes.

It is high time to end this negative action-inaction cycle. Let us fulfil the heavy responsibility entrusted to us by all the States Members of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security.

In this regard, Japan reiterates that, while standing ready to work with colleagues to adopt more robust actions, we strongly support the draft presidential statement proposed by the United States as a step forward.

Where do we stand — on the side of the rule breaker or on the side of the rule keeper? We know the correct answer. Let us do our job.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for his briefing today and welcome the participation of the representative of the Republic of Korea in today's meeting.

The United Kingdom condemns the launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of a further intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on 16 March. That was the tenth ICBM launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since the start of 2022.

We should make no mistake. That missile was not designed, built, deployed and launched overnight. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea first displayed that type in 2020. It has been tested multiple times since in a long-planned development process, in defiance of the Council's decisions and shielded by two Council members.

Those same members may seek to equate lawful defensive military exercises with the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Let us be clear: defensive exercises are safe when other States are notified of them in advance and when they operate

within defined areas, as South Korean and United States exercises have done.

We should protect the credibility of the Security Council by challenging such violations with a firm and united response. Five years of inaction, forced on the Council by two members, have left no one safer. Now is the time for a comprehensive resolution that addresses international security concerns with new targeted measures while also setting conditions for renewed dialogue and facilitating aid.

We should recall that the cost of those illicit launches is being borne by the North Korean people, whose Government diverts resources from basic economic needs towards its illegal weapons programme. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow United Nations international staff to enter the country. Sanctions exemptions are in place to support expedited humanitarian assistance.

We again call on all Member States to fully implement the existing resolutions, which all Council members voted in favour of multiple times to counter the continued development of the prohibited programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Finally, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease the launches and engage meaningfully with the offers of dialogue from the United States and the Republic of Korea. Diplomacy is the only route to sustained peace on the Korean peninsula.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for another important briefing. I welcome the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to this meeting.

Over the past week, we have witnessed a series of deeply concerning ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On Thursday, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched another intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), reportedly a Hwasong-1, with a range capable of reaching much of the globe. The ICBM launch was accompanied by an almost daily series of other ballistic missile launches. The most recent of those took place only yesterday.

Malta strongly condemns such launches, in open defiance of Security Council resolutions. We again recall that resolution 2397 (2017), adopted unanimously in response to an ICBM launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, decided that the Council

would take action to place further restrictions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if faced with further launches. At that time, the Council rightly considered that even one ICBM launch constituted a threat to regional and international peace and security, and it responded accordingly. Yet today the Council stands frozen and forced to not respond to any of the ICBM launches witnessed over the past year.

The launches are only the most recent in a deeply concerning pattern of reckless behaviour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, posing a significant threat to international peace and security and undermining global non-proliferation efforts.

Despite its obligations, and with a total disregard for the concerns voiced by many Member States, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued to develop its ballistic missile and nuclear programme, with a record number of ballistic missile launches in 2022. Three months into 2023, we are seeing a very similar pattern.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea recently announced a new doctrine setting out the conditions in which it could use nuclear weapons, including pre-emptively. It further announced that it would exponentially increase its nuclear weapons arsenal, including tactical weapons, and that it would also develop another ICBM system and launch its first military satellite.

The gravity of the situation cannot be overstated. The Security Council cannot continue to stand by while its decisions, as defined in a number of its own resolutions, and credibility are consistently undermined. The Council has the duty and the responsibility to discuss and act on threats to international peace and security.

Malta urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in meaningful dialogue towards denuclearization and to adhere to its obligations under Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must completely, verifiably and irreversibly abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Malta's concern over the humanitarian situation faced by the population of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues. The situation is dire, and

serious humanitarian needs continue to be ignored by the country's leadership. An estimated 10.7 million people are undernourished and require emergency relief. Instead, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea chooses to waste its resources on costly ballistic missile launches and its illegal weapons programme. It continues to restrict access to humanitarian actors. Malta calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to restore access to United Nations and other humanitarian actors so that its population can receive the aid that it requires.

Finally, I would like to remind every member of the Security Council of our shared objective: the peace and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Delay and inaction will push that only further from realization. The Council must uphold its own decisions and responsibilities and act now. To that end, Malta supports a presidential statement.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea. I thank Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča for his briefing. I also thank the Security Council presidency for having convened this meeting at the request of several countries, including Ecuador, in the context of further intercontinental ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Since 2022, that has become a recurring practice, without a united response from the Security Council.

As we said on 20 February (see S/PV.9264), such actions threaten regional and international peace and security by exacerbating tensions in a complex context and undermine the credibility of the Security Council's efforts. For that reason, Ecuador condemns the recent launch, which once again defies Security Council provisions and the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We therefore also urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resume its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

I reiterate the appropriateness of implementing resolution 2397 (2017), adopted unanimously, by which the Council committed to taking further significant measures in response to any launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Through the resolution and those that preceded it, the Council also unanimously reiterated its concern about the grave hardship to which the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were being subjected, which it condemned

“for pursuing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles instead of the welfare of its people while people in the DPRK have great unmet needs” (resolution 2397 (2017), para. 23).

As my delegation recalled at the Council's Arria Formula meeting last Friday, resolution 2397 (2017) also reflected the particular impact that those policies have on food insecurity for women and girls. In view of the foregoing, Ecuador supports efforts to achieve a diplomatic and political solution that will allow for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and until that happens, we reiterate the Council's responsibility to use all the tools at its disposal to promote compliance with its resolutions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I thank the Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča for his informative briefing and welcome to this meeting the delegation of the Republic of Korea.

We are once again struck by the timing of these meetings. It was one month ago, to the day, when we were last in this Chamber discussing the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile launched by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see S/PV.9264). Brazil condemned the launch in its strongest terms then, and we condemn it again now. We stand equally ready to condemn future launches, yet it seems clear to us that something needs to change.

We have three choices. We can resign ourselves to being back in this Chamber every month to hear briefings, condemn missile launches and restate our national positions. That could easily turn into a new normal for this file: monthly meetings where we hear technical updates and restate our positions, as we do for other files.

Alternatively, we could have less meetings and resign ourselves to doing less. We could decide that the situation in the region is simply too complex, the divisions in the Security Council too great and that there is simply not enough overlap in positions to allow the Council some space to act. We would meet only in the event of truly unusual developments, such as a nuclear test. The rest of the time, amid missile launches and rising risks of accidents, we would simply hope for the best.

Both of those options are dangerous in the extreme. The first normalizes performance, while the second normalizes inaction. Let me suggest a third.

We can accept that the situation is complex and that there are divisions in the Council, but choose to think concretely about what can be done within that context of complexity and division. That will, necessarily, involve compromises for all. Yet it offers our best hope for making progress on this file towards our shared goal of peace, stability and denuclearization.

In the spirit of thinking concretely, let me put forward a few proposals that we could immediately work on, as a Council.

The United States Mission has shared a draft presidential statement. We believe the text provides a good starting point for negotiations. The Security Council can work towards a product that reflects the views of its members, highlighting the need for both condemnation and sustainable engagement. We urge all members to engage in good faith discussions around the proposal so that we can produce a balanced document that represents to the greatest extent possible the diversity of views of the Council.

Secondly, we have heard repeated references to draft resolutions that were proposed in the past but never adopted. We could and should be holding technical discussions at the expert level to see how both texts could be brought together in one document that would be able to garner consensus. There is agreement on preserving the authority of the Council, on addressing the humanitarian situation and on finding a peaceful political solution to the issues on the peninsula. Agreement should be possible — let us work towards it.

Thirdly and finally, we should think creatively about the role that the United Nations itself can play to bring down tensions, facilitate engagement and help to establish a process of negotiation that is transparent, predictable and seen as legitimate by all. The Council, under its Chapter VI authority, can do much to provide its good offices and recommend measures of adjustment that can lay the groundwork for sustained engagement. The tools of Chapter VI remain woefully underexplored in this file. We must revisit the Chapter VI toolbox if we are to find a comprehensive solution to the file.

In conclusion, the situation is urgent, and the Council must act. Yet action does not always mean repeating what we have done in the past. Action, in a context of tension and division, means finding creative ways to build bridges, reduce tensions and reaffirm the authority of the Council as the main organ for promoting peace and security. It should do so using all

its tools, including — and indeed especially — those for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I will begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča for his briefing to the Council and welcoming the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea.

We are three months into the year, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already launched 11 short-range ballistic missiles and two intercontinental ballistic missiles, including its most powerful, the Hwasong-17. That development is a worrisome reflection of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's intransigence regarding the Council's resolutions and its resolve to accomplish its 2023 goals, set out at the sixth plenary meeting of the eighth Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, held earlier this year.

The acts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to aggressively test, refine and expand its weapons and nuclear arsenal breaches international law obligations and the resolutions of the Council. We are gravely concerned by the situation and firmly deplore the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reiterate our call for a de-escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula and reiterate our demand to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions, refrain from further ballistic missile launches and return to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

As we have often said, the instruments of influence that the Council has wielded thus far, particularly its existing resolutions and sanctions, have not been fully successful in stopping the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's weapons programme or eliciting its cooperation. As a Council, we must therefore reassess our approach and recommit to our common objectives to achieve concrete progress in the furtherance of peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

We believe that a principled and pragmatic approach based on diplomacy, dialogue and trust-building is needed to incrementally foster conditions that allow for constructive engagements between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the international community on its weapons programme. In that regard, we take note of the practical measures that have been

suggested today in the briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča.

While different stakeholders may have different interests on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it must be obvious that a nuclearized peninsula is in no one's interest. We must therefore work collaboratively to strengthen the unity of the Council on that matter and act faithfully on behalf of all Member States who have entrusted us with this powerful mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Ms. Koumby Missambo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča for his briefing, and I welcome presence among us of the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

We are meeting this morning in the wake of the launch on 16 March by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of yet another intercontinental ballistic missile, a Hwasong-17. One of countless other launches, it was preceded two days earlier by that of two short-range missiles and followed yesterday by another short-range ballistic missile. The regularity of those launches and the growing threat they pose represent an unprecedented escalation. The military capability of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the increasingly aggressive language that accompanies its displays of force leave no doubt about the level of threat, not only on the Korean peninsula but internationally. The situation should be contained very quickly in order to avert any risk of intentional or accidental disaster, especially since if we are to believe the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, its launches also include tactical cruise missiles. My country condemns the missile launches and reiterates its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We also reaffirm the central role of the Treaty in the international disarmament architecture, with which the parties must comply.

The Security Council must ensure international peace and security. The fact that it is being prevented from doing so is a matter of great concern. Many people in that region of the world live under a constant threat of attack or military accident, and that is unacceptable for either party. We call on all the parties to do everything possible to return to the negotiating table in order to find a political solution to the situation. We must reach a consensus if we are to break the current deadlock,

in addition to halting the exceptional increase in arms production, including of tactical nuclear weapons. The status quo has led to ever-increasing tensions. The risk of a confrontation leading to disastrous consequences increases a little more with each new strike. We cannot entertain such an outcome in any way.

In conclusion, my country calls on the parties, as well as countries with influence, to take a decisive step towards a resumption of negotiations. We must remove the continuing obstacles to dialogue to enable the parties to negotiate openly, frankly and sincerely with a view to ending the nuclear threat on the Korean peninsula.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We join others in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča for his briefing. The second launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile this year is a demonstration of the unfortunate escalation of security tensions in the region.

Switzerland reiterates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme is a threat to the entire international community. The disastrous humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons must prompt us to redouble our efforts in favour of non-proliferation, disarmament and maintaining the nuclear taboo. We have therefore been following with concern the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's increases both in ballistic-missile launches and cruise-missile tests, in addition to its development of increasingly dangerous and expansive nuclear delivery systems. We are meeting again today in circumstances similar to those of last month (see S/PV.9264) and exchanging similar remarks. However, our meeting and discussion today are still important, because we cannot ignore our duty and responsibilities in a number of areas.

First, in the area of nuclear non-proliferation, it is our collective duty to condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ballistic-missile tests. Those launches are in violation of Security Council resolutions and therefore of international law. Switzerland once again urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its obligations under the Council's resolutions and to take concrete steps to abandon its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, together with all the other annex 2 states, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We would like to point out that while the obligations

under the Council's resolutions apply primarily to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they also apply to all other States, which are required to ensure and enforce the effective implementation of the relevant Council sanctions.

Secondly, with regard to the implementation of sanctions, Switzerland welcomes the attention the Council has committed to ensuring that the provision of humanitarian assistance remains possible. The Council demonstrated its commitment and unity in that regard in its adoption of resolution 2664 (2022), which must be implemented. The Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) plays an essential role in facilitating humanitarian assistance through a system of exemptions. That mechanism now carries a humanitarian exemption applicable to all sanctions regimes. We therefore hope that once the severe pandemic-related restrictions on international humanitarian assistance are lifted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that assistance can be quickly resumed.

Thirdly, the Council has a role to play in encouraging dialogue, de-escalation and the quest for diplomatic solutions. While the Council's prolonged silence on the issue is a cause for concern and is preventing it from functioning as a political actor on the Korean peninsula, there is still a collective and individual will to engage in and support a dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as we have heard over and over in previous statements. We welcome the call for using the good offices of Secretary-General and encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage constructively with the Council and the United Nations system. That call for dialogue should be based on a united position of the Council, and Switzerland will support every effort to achieve that unity. The option of issuing a presidential statement, in our view, is a way to achieve that, and we support all members in seeking to establish a consensus on it.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for his briefing. The tensions and confrontations on the Korean peninsula are increasing, and China is concerned about it. We have taken note of the recent launch activities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea yesterday as well as the recent continued military operations in the region by various countries. The top priority now is for all the parties to exercise calm and restraint and to refrain from reciprocal shows of force, in order to

prevent the situation from escalating further or getting out of control altogether.

The reasons for the evolving situation on the Korean peninsula are not accidental. Back in 2018, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea took a positive initiative aimed at giving up nuclear weapons in return for security. However, the United States showed no goodwill in response, as the principle of action for action requires, which wasted an important opportunity for achieving denuclearization on the peninsula. Since the start of this year, the United States and others have continued their unprecedented large-scale joint military exercises on the peninsula and in surrounding areas, with plans to expand the deployment of strategic weapons. That method of deterrence and the ratcheting up of pressure has further entrenched the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sense of insecurity, leading to the current elevated tensions. The most recent statement by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stressed that its actions are countermeasures against the hostile activities of the United States.

The international community must not shy away from the crux of the peninsula issue. We should draw lessons from history and remain committed to a political solution. In that regard, I would like to make three points.

First, all the parties should exercise restraint, demonstrate mutual goodwill and seek a solution in a calm, cool-headed and stable manner, in addition to forging well-meaning interactions aimed at gradually building mutual trust. The representative of the United States just said that the United States had been making diplomatic efforts to seek a dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, despite those claims, the United States has been fabricating tensions on the peninsula. Such an approach is nothing short of dangerous and hypocritical. The United States should instead demonstrate sincerity and take the initiative to come up with realistic and feasible solutions that respond directly to the legitimate concerns of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea so as to create favourable conditions for an improvement in the situation.

Secondly, China supports the Security Council in playing a constructive role in promoting a political solution. The discussions held and the actions taken by the Council should contribute to de-escalation, the resumption of dialogue and the promotion of unity. The Council should not simply hold meetings for the sake

of doing so. China has expressed its reservations about the adoption of a Council resolution or presidential statement precisely because we do not deem that to be constructive. On the contrary, we are concerned that it would only stimulate the already tense situation on the Korean peninsula. If the United States genuinely hopes to break through the current deadlock, it should respond favourably and seriously to the draft resolution proposed jointly by China and Russia aimed at alleviating the humanitarian situation. That would send a positive message in terms of promoting a political settlement and encouraging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resume dialogue, thereby creating the conditions for easing tensions on the peninsula.

Thirdly, the representative of the United States said that we must uphold the authority and credibility of the Security Council. However, the United States has called for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to renounce its nuclear weapons under the banner of non-proliferation, while at the same time transferring tons of weapons-grade enriched uranium to a non-nuclear-weapon State. That practice of double standards is precisely why the credibility of the Security Council is being seriously undermined. The cooperation on nuclear submarines between the United States and its other trilateral partners has further undermined the international non-proliferation regime, provoking an arms race and threatening peace and security in the region. Furthermore, it is not conducive to the international community persuading the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons programme and to promoting the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

China calls on the individual countries concerned to heed the calls of the international community and the countries of the region to abandon the Cold War mentality and to cease all bloc politics and political manipulation. They must sincerely fulfil their non-proliferation obligations by repealing the decision on nuclear submarine cooperation and choosing the path towards a political settlement through concrete actions.

China calls on all the parties concerned to adhere to a common, comprehensive, collaborative and sustainable vision of security and to assume their respective responsibilities. The legitimate concerns of all sides should be duly addressed through balanced and meaningful dialogue so as to achieve common security. China will continue to pursue a dual-track, synchronized, phased approach and to play its part in

the search for a political settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for his briefing and welcome the participation of the representative of the Republic of Korea here today.

We join the Secretary-General in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 15 March — the tenth of its kind in 12 months. The missile fell a mere 200 kilometres from Japanese soil, not only endangering lives but also putting at risk maritime and aviation traffic. This time last year, the Council met to discuss the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's first ICBM test launch following a hiatus of five years (see S/PV.9004). The Democratic People's Republic of Korea also launched a short-range ballistic missile on 19 March local time, demonstrating an alarming escalation of its testing programme. It is deeply regrettable that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues that dangerous and irresponsible behaviour, threatening its neighbours and challenging global non-proliferation norms. It is not just a threat to the region but also a threat to all of us and to our stability. The erosion of the non-proliferation regime continues to threaten international peace and security.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must respect international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It must abide by Security Council resolutions and return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Last year, we urged the Council to act and not to treat such provocative behaviour as the norm. Unfortunately, one year later, the escalation continues, and we are no closer to stability on the Korean peninsula. The United Arab Emirates calls on the Security Council to unite in condemning such actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United Arab Emirates is grateful for the work of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which has extensively detailed the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to evade sanctions at sea, as well as reporting on alarming cyberthreat actors and activities. Today, we must bear in mind the clear and detailed information reported by the Panel on how the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear posture has shifted to be more aggressive, increasing the risk exponentially. The Democratic People's Republic

of Korea's recent tests of short-range ballistic and cruise missiles for so-called tactical nuclear purposes should raise a red flag here. The Panel of Experts has also reported that the production of nuclear missile materials has continued, which is a critical concern for the Security Council.

Millions of North Koreans continue to suffer from food insecurity and impoverishment, which has been exacerbated by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's coronavirus disease measures. We regret to see the leaders of North Korea directing the country's limited resources towards its illegal weapons programme while its people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. The United Arab Emirates continues to believe that dialogue is the only way forward on the question of the Korean peninsula, both for improving the lives of those suffering and for obtaining true and lasting peace. It is high time for the Security Council to speak with one voice to address the situation and for diplomacy to prevail. We should also encourage the Secretary-General to use his good offices on this file, in parallel with other de-escalation efforts.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for his briefing.

Our position is well known: Russia opposes any military activity that threatens the security of the Korean peninsula and the countries of North-East Asia. We continue to expect that the current trend towards escalation will be replaced by a search for a negotiated de-escalation. In that regard, we call for restraint and practical steps to resume dialogue.

With regard to the regular discussion of the situation on the Korean peninsula in the Security Council, we would like to emphasize once again the need to take into account all the factors relevant to that situation. Only that kind of approach, which pays due attention to both the long-standing issues and the most recent actions of all the parties involved, will facilitate a truly constructive discussion.

In that connection, we must once again highlight the particular responsibility of Washington and its allies, who have set out to impose sanctions and forceful pressure on Pyongyang based on the concept of so-called extended deterrence. That has already led to a sharp increase in military activity in North-East Asia, which clearly serves only to deter a political and diplomatic settlement of the problems of the Korean

peninsula and to contradict the declared objectives of the members of the Council. Yet, we continue to hear more and more bellicose rhetoric, while the intensity of the military manoeuvres conducted by the United States and its allies continues undiminished. Indeed, the United States-South Korean Freedom Shield exercise began on 13 March, along with a whole series of field manoeuvres, and next week we expect to see the first United States-South Korean Ssangyong exercise in five years, involving naval and air forces. It is especially troubling that those exercises are being officially presented as evidence of "the will of the South Korean-American alliance to achieve peace through strength".

After hearing such statements, it is clear what path those countries have embraced and what calls from the Security Council now for the resumption of talks are worth. The measures actually taken highlight the opposite.

We note once again that there is no alternative to a multilateral political and diplomatic process aimed at creating a system of peace in North-East Asia that would take into account the legitimate concerns of all — and I stress "all" — the States of the region and at providing them with reliable security assurances. Otherwise, the situation concerning the Korean peninsula will remain locked in a vicious circle.

Let us recall that, in the past, Washington and its allies essentially disregarded the steps taken by Pyongyang in 2018 and 2019. The implementation of those measures could have led to a fundamental improvement in the situation in the subregion. The subsequent repeated calls by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the United States to cease hostile activities and to refrain from escalating pressure also went unheeded. It is futile to expect Pyongyang to respond positively to stepped-up pressure, the threat of sanctions spirals or empty promises.

The situation on the Korean peninsula cannot be considered in isolation from other processes in the Asia-Pacific region either. In parallel with proactive efforts to step up the military capabilities of the United States-allied countries of North-East Asia, we note Washington's persistent advancement of its unilateral security doctrine in the Asia-Pacific region, the establishment of new blocs, such as the unification of the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, also known as AUKUS, whereby nuclear-powered submarines are transferred to a non-nuclear State. That has a devastating impact and has resulted in

the emergence of artificial dividing lines in that part of the world. Such aspirations give rise to clear concerns — not only for Pyongyang, but also for other countries of the region.

Obviously, attempts to increase sanctions pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea do not help matters either. For many years, we have been highlighting the need to end this policy, which is a dead end in form, and inhuman in substance. However, the negative aggregate effects of international and unilateral restrictive measures continue to accumulate, exacerbating the plight of the North Korean population. We would note, in particular, that unilateral restrictions not only violate the sovereignty and legitimate interests of Member States, but also contradict the norms and rules of international trade and undermine the integrity of the restrictions agreed upon by the Security Council. Attempts to provide any degree of legitimacy to such restrictions through the authority of the Security Council or the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) are unacceptable.

We recall that Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — and we heard today calls on the need to comply with them — provide for a search for a political and diplomatic solution. Those specific provisions remain unfulfilled. We note once again that Russia is committed to the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. In that regard, we draw attention to the Russian-Chinese plan of action for a comprehensive settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula. The plan spells out concrete measures to be taken in various areas by the States involved. The Russian-Chinese draft political and humanitarian resolution of the Security Council is still on the table. The adoption of that draft resolution could truly contribute to Council efforts to resolve the current difficult situation on the Korean peninsula.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Mozambique.

I wish to start by conveying our thanks to Mr. Miroslav Jenča for his insightful briefing. We recognize the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea in this meeting.

Mozambique expresses its deep concern about the rising tensions and deteriorating situation in the Korean peninsula. The prevailing environment of confrontation in that region poses a serious threat to peace and

security — not only in the Korean peninsula, but also in other regions around the world. As a peace-loving nation and a defender of harmonious coexistence between peoples and States, Mozambique is concerned about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from contributing to the escalation of tensions and to comply with resolution 2270 (2016).

The maintenance of international peace and security is the main reason behind the creation of the United Nations. Preserving peace, harmony and stability is therefore the shared responsibility of all States. For that reason, Mozambique cannot accept acts that, by their nature, pose serious threats to peace and stability anywhere in the world. We encourage the promotion of permanent dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea so as to alleviate tensions and curb the nuclear arms race, thus contributing to the prevention of a nuclear disaster.

Mozambique reiterates its strong support for the Secretary-General's vision to secure our common future, as laid out in his Agenda for Disarmament. We believe that new technologies must be used for improving the quality of life of human beings and not for aggravating humanitarian crises. We believe in committed solutions to save future generations from weapons of mass destruction so the world can be a safer place.

Let me conclude by reiterating Mozambique's commitment to all efforts, measures and initiatives conducive to promoting global peace and security, particularly in the Korean peninsula, through a credible dialogue process.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor a second time. I apologize, but I feel like I have to correct some of the fallacies that we have just heard from our Chinese and Russian counterparts.

First, specifically on the assertion that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea abandoned its nuclear and ballistic missile programme in 2018. That is not true. The slew of launches that we have seen demonstrate to all of us that the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea has continued to advance its programme within its own borders, even if it temporarily stopped testing.

On the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, also known as AUKUS, we have said time and time again — and reaffirm here in the Chamber — that it does not violate the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Our Chinese colleagues are once again trying to distract us from the matter at hand, which is to condemn the proliferation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I find it very interesting that neither China nor Russia today called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its testing — not a single time. I know that they do not agree with these ongoing tests, but I find really interesting and enlightening that they refuse to condemn the testing in the Security Council even as the 13 other members are doing so.

I want to say that with regard to the joint draft resolution on providing humanitarian assistance, such a draft resolution would reward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for refusing to comply with Security Council resolutions. What its Government is doing is depriving its own people of the humanitarian assistance that they need, which would alleviate their suffering and enable the international community to come in and provide that assistance, something we are all willing to do without a resolution.

Turning to the joint military exercises, they are long-standing, routine and purely defensive in nature. They support the security of the United States, the Republic of Korea and peace and stability in the region. The United States harbours no hostile intentions where the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is concerned. We have not sent any missiles flying over the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. No attacks have been made on the territory of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, we remain committed to the security of the Republic of Korea, which includes our alliance's combined defence posture. Our exercises are not the cause of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launches. We were not conducting exercises when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea began its recent launches at an unprecedented pace.

To be clear, this is about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is not about the United States. It is about that country's attacks on peace and security and on Security Council resolutions that were adopted by the entire Council. It is about condemning the actions

that we have seen them take over the past two years, including two tests that occurred in the past week and that all 15 of us should be roundly condemning.

The President: The representative of the United Kingdom has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I apologize for taking the floor once again, and I will try to be brief.

First, I want to address China and Russia's raising of the question of the cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS). North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes violate multiple Security Council resolutions, and there is therefore simply no comparison between AUKUS and the destabilizing threat that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses to the region. AUKUS will be conducted in a manner that is fully consistent with our respective obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the relevant safeguards agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Turning to the draft resolution that China and Russia referred to, proposing a lifting of sanctions, it would frankly be an incredible response to what is actually happening on the ground on the peninsula. The text of the draft resolution is explicitly based on compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with Security Council resolutions. It is written in black and white. We have all heard that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not complying with Security Council resolutions. The Council therefore needs a serious response to a serious situation on the peninsula, not a draft resolution that rewards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for conducting missile tests.

The President: The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am acutely aware that we have yet another meeting following this one. However, since the representatives of the United States and United Kingdom have twice taken the floor, I feel obliged to respond, and I will also try to be brief. The representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom challenged China's position on the issue of the peninsula and its reaction to the recent missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. China's position has been clear and consistent. We have been committed to maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula,

promoting its denuclearization and using diplomatic means and negotiations to resolve the problem. That position has never changed. And China's reaction is unquestionably based on an analysis and judgment of the current situation. As I said earlier, the United States and other countries have been carrying out military exercises on and around the peninsula on an unprecedented scale since the beginning of the year. A posture involving that kind of deterrence and pressure has heightened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's fear of insecurity and exacerbated tensions. The representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom raised a number of questions. To save time, I will focus on two of them.

First, concerning the joint military exercises, I believe we are all aware that there was a period of time, since the beginning of the year, during which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had generally exercised restraint and refrained from taking excessive action. However, the United States and others have frequently conducted various military activities directed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the peninsula, increasing the level and scale of their joint exercises. At this very moment, the United States and others are conducting the longest and largest military exercises of recent years. The representative of the United States said just now that they are entirely regular, routine and defensive in nature. However, let us take a look at what all these exercises are practicing. They include striking targets deep inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, decapitation operations and occupying Pyongyang. Their very names indicate anything but defensive operations. Are not such shows of deterrence and force exacerbating tensions on the peninsula?

Through its official media, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recently expressed concern about the fact that the situation on the peninsula continues to deteriorate and is verging on the brink of conflict. It has called on the countries concerned to put international peace and stability first and stop military confrontations. We hope that the United States will effectively heed and respond to the reasonable concerns of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and leave space for diplomatic efforts.

The second question to focus on was raised by the representatives of both the United States and the United Kingdom, that is, the submarine cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom and the

United States. If we are talking about the dangers of nuclear proliferation, nuclear-submarine cooperation is undoubtedly the elephant in the room. The three countries' so-called adherence to the highest nuclear non-proliferation standards cannot conceal the essence of their cooperation. What is its real nature? In essence, the cooperation among the three parties constitutes the first-ever transfer of highly enriched, weapons-grade uranium from a nuclear-weapon State to a non-nuclear-weapon State, which will enable Australia to easily cross the nuclear threshold. That is a serious proliferation risk and runs contrary to the objectives and purposes of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Isaid earlier that the United States has been practicing double standards with regard to non-proliferation. On the one hand, it constantly hypes the nuclear issues involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran and other non-proliferation hotspot issues, while on the other investing major resources, exerting tremendous pressure and trying in every way it can to prevent the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran from acquiring highly enriched uranium, including through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, prohibiting Iran from producing highly enriched uranium of more than 3.67 per cent uranium-235. Twenty years ago, the United States also brazenly used force against the Saddam regime in Iraq on a pretext of non-proliferation. However, it has now abandoned its non-proliferation standards. And for the sake of its political interests, it is transferring several tons of highly enriched, weapons-grade uranium, of more than 90 per cent uranium-235, to Australia. This has exposed its hypocrisy in ignoring its own responsibilities and obligations and the concerns of the international community.

If I were allowed to continue, I could certainly respond to all the issues raised by the delegations of the United States and the United Kingdom. However, due to time constraints, I need to conclude my rebuttal. I urge the delegations of the United States and the United Kingdom and other colleagues to seriously consider the joint proposal of China and Russia, which is intended to introduce some goodwill and positive signals so as to create favourable conditions for détente in or improvement of the situation. If some countries are really concerned about détente or the relaxation of tensions on the peninsula, we should treat such a proposal with the seriousness that it deserves.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It was also interesting for me to listen to the views set out by the representative of the United States of America about Washington and its allies allegedly not nurturing any hostile plans directed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Exercises are allegedly being carried out routinely, but it is also alleged that they are in no way in response to the launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic. It is unclear why, then, and in response to what, those exercises are being carried out. This military activity is unprecedented in nature.

Let us recall that those same exercises — the Ssangyong exercises — had not been carried out for five years, so they cannot be labelled routine. At the same time, with their rhetoric, the United States and its allies are completely turning everything upside down with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, when they say that their policy is not hostile. Previously, we had heard that NATO itself was merely a defensive alliance, and that Iraq allegedly possessed weapons of mass destruction, under which pretext, the country was transformed into a land on fire.

For, in reality, it will turn out the same way for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: notwithstanding what is currently being said in the Security Council Chamber, similar plans are being laid with respect to the Democratic People's Republic. In fact, the Democratic People's Republic has been advancing calls for a political and diplomatic resolution, but they have been completely disregarded. The Security Council cannot simply be a one-sided game, where we only hear from one side of the street. The Russian-Chinese draft resolution and the proposals that we submit to the Security Council are specifically geared towards arriving at a political settlement. It is a diplomatic path consisting of constructive steps, which Washington is constantly trying to block.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking the President for convening today's important meeting. My gratitude also goes to Assistant Secretary-General Jenča for his briefing.

The Republic of Korea condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the continued ballistic-missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launch on 16 March, and the subsequent ballistic-missile launch on 19 March local time, which clearly constitute flagrant violations of multiple Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a so-called Hwasong-17 ICBM just a few hours before my President's flight to Japan, which was a deliberate attempt to sabotage a critical milestone in future-oriented Korea-Japan bilateral relations. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has launched a total of 10 ICBMs since February 2022, which means that we have witnessed ICBM launches almost every month since then.

However, at this crucial juncture, the Security Council remains silent due to the intransigence stemming from the vetoes wielded by two permanent members last May (see S/PV.9048), despite the support of all of the other 13 Council members. In the General Assembly debate last June, precipitated by those vetoes, we witnessed an overwhelming convergence on the international community's position on this matter: that the Security Council should take action in unity (see A/76/PV.77 and A/76/PV.78). Unfortunately, the Council is still turning a blind eye to the Democratic People's Republic's repeated brazen violations.

Indeed, we are living with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's dangerous missile provocations on a near-daily basis. In this regard, I have noticed, including today, that several misguided narratives floating around the United Nations both contribute to the Council's inaction and blur the focus of the international community. I would therefore like to clarify the following three points.

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea argues that its continued ballistic-missile provocations are mainly triggered by the Republic of Korea-United States military exercises. This narrative simply does not hold water. The combined defence-and-deterrence posture of the Republic of Korea and the United States, including our joint exercises, is in response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's military threat. Such defensive measures are the least of all duties of a responsible Government.

Moreover, Pyongyang has conducted six nuclear tests and launched more than 200 ballistic missiles over the last several decades, according to its own

plan, regardless of our military exercises or our policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, even during the period of our so-called Sunshine Policy. This is largely because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is obsessed with the advancement of its nuclear capabilities to sustain its very weak regime, despite the severe and ongoing suffering of its own people.

The Council's failure to respond to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's serious provocation in May further emboldened the country. Last September, Pyongyang promulgated its new law on its nuclear-weapon policy, which allows for pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons on a dangerously arbitrary basis. In January 2023, Pyongyang declared it would mass produce tactical nuclear weapons and exponentially increase its nuclear arsenal. It has also declared its intention to pursue new types of ICBMs.

Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced today that it conducted a nuclear counter-attack-simulation drill, threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons against the Republic of Korea. This palpably demonstrates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea declares its nuclear policies and conducts dangerous tests according to its own playbook. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is simply fine-tuning the timing of its provocations, considering relevant circumstances to fit its excuses.

Secondly, according to another false narrative, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's so-called positive measures in 2018–2019 had not been reciprocated. This is simply not true either. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile programmes violate numerous Security Council resolutions, and in this sense the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-declared moratorium of nuclear and ICBM tests did not amount to a demonstration of so-called good will, but an obligation that it had always been required to fulfil.

Pyongyang has neither provided the full picture of its nuclear programme, which could serve as the first step for verification, nor attempted to freeze its

nuclear activities, even for a short period of time. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has only taken a few easily reversible measures, such as destroying the entrances of the tunnels of its nuclear-test sites, and they have in fact reversed those measures.

Thirdly, some argue for a so-called balanced implementation of both sanctions and dialogue in the relevant Security Council resolutions. However, it is none other than the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that does not respond and, in fact, further outrightly rejects the continued calls by the international community for dialogue and diplomacy, including the Republic of Korea's "Audacious Initiative", as well as the call by the United States for dialogue without any preconditions.

Some even argue that sanctions are ineffective. However, sanctions must be fully implemented by all, including permanent members of the Security Council, in order to be effective. The implementation of the existing Security Council resolutions is an obligation conferred on all States Members of the Organization by the Charter of the United Nations. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now playing for time to further advance its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, taking full advantage of the weakened implementation of the sanctions and the paralysed Security Council.

We have vividly witnessed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's record number of 10 ICBM launches in a year, in violation of the enforcement measures decided by this organ. Pyongyang's belligerent policy, menace to the functioning of the Security Council and brazen mockery of the United Nations itself must finally come to an end, and it must be held accountable by the Council for its continued breach of international obligations.

The Republic of Korea reiterates its commitment to engaging in diplomacy with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop its very dangerous behaviour and respond positively to dialogue.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.