



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

*Provisional*

## 9406<sup>th</sup>

meeting

Friday, 25 August 2023, 3 p.m.

New York

*President:* Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield . . . . . (United States of America)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. França Danese
China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
France . . . . .	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
Gabon . . . . .	Ms. Koumby Missambo
Ghana . . . . .	Ms. Kesse Antwi
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Ishikane
Malta . . . . .	Mr. Camilleri
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Fernandes
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
Switzerland . . . . .	Mr. Hauri
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mrs. Alhefeiti
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki

## Agenda

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.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 representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and 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. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the 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. Khiari.

**Mr. Khiari:** At 3.50 a.m. local time on 24 August, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted what it described as its "second launch of a military reconnaissance satellite" from the Sohae Satellite Launching Station. The launch follows a previous attempt to launch a satellite on 31 May. According to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the launch failed "due to an error in the emergency blasting system during the third-stage flight". Official media said that a third reconnaissance satellite launch would be conducted in October.

While the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued a pre-launch notification to the Japanese Coast Guard, it did not issue airspace or maritime safety notifications to the International Maritime Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization or the International Telecommunications Union. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unannounced launches represent a serious risk to international civil aviation and maritime traffic.

On 24 August, the Secretary-General strongly condemned this launch of yet another satellite using ballistic missile technology. Any launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea using ballistic missile technology is contrary to the relevant

Security Council resolutions. He reiterated his call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease such acts and to swiftly resume dialogue without preconditions to achieve the goal of sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

It should be recalled that developing a military reconnaissance satellite was part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's five-year military development plan, unveiled in January 2021. In line with the plan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea significantly increased its missile launch activities in 2022 and 2023, including more than 90 launches using ballistic missile technology, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As we have previously briefed, there is a need for practical measures to reduce tensions, reverse the dangerous dynamic and create space to explore diplomatic avenues. I emphasize the importance of re-establishing communication channels, particularly among military entities. Exercising maximum restraint is critical to avoiding unintended escalation. Diplomacy and dialogue, not isolation, are the only way forward. In that respect, the Secretary-General commends Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States for their continued willingness and offers to engage in dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on any issue without preconditions.

Pending the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, it is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintain the highest level of safety at its nuclear facilities, in order to prevent nuclear accidents that would be disastrous for the region and the world.

The Security Council, in its resolution 2397 (2017), reaffirmed its decisions that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shall suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile programme, abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and immediately cease all related activities.

Since our last briefing on 13 July (see S/PV.9376), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has openly displayed its nuclear-weapon delivery systems during both a weaponry exhibition and a military parade. Such displays undermine the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that underpins it.

I would like to highlight once more our concerns regarding the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, compounded by climate hazards and ongoing border closures. The United Nations is ready to assist the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in addressing the basic needs of its vulnerable population.

We have been closely following reports of an easing of border restrictions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Given the progress in vaccines and treatments and the declaration by the World Health Organization Director-General on 5 May that the coronavirus disease no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow the unimpeded re-entry and rotation of the international community, including the United Nations Resident Coordinator and other international United Nations staff. A collective return would have a positive impact on international support to the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and strengthen communication channels.

Let me close by stressing that the unity of the Security Council is essential.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States of America.

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his informative briefing.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again defied the Council. It has defied the Council by continuing to pursue its unlawful ballistic missile programme. On 23 August, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea attempted yet again to launch a satellite, using a space launch vehicle. But although that launch failed and although we were given advance notification, this is another violation of Security Council resolutions — a violation the United States condemns in the strongest possible terms.

The Security Council has repeatedly demanded that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not conduct any further launches using ballistic missile technology. Those launches directly undermine the non-proliferation regime. They move us away from our collective goal of disarmament and threaten the neighbours of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the entire world. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea

claims, as it always has, that its pursuit of a nuclear weapons programme is an act of self-defence. But we all know the truth. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea puts its paranoia and selfish interests over the dire needs of the North Korean people.

The war machine of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is fuelled by repression and cruelty, as the Council heard from United Nations experts just last week (see S/PV.9398). It is shameful and a grave threat to global peace. The most recent launch of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea caused an evacuation alert in Okinawa, Japan, raised tensions in North-East Asia, destabilized the security situation in the region and increased the risk of triggering military escalation. With each test, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea further refines its weapons capabilities, and Pyongyang has already announced its commitment to launching another satellite in October. I urge every single member of the Council to condemn that launch and discourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from conducting another test.

The vast majority of Council members have affirmed their opposition to the unlawful actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and called for Council unity to address them. We thank those members. We thank them for their continued partnership and dedication to non-proliferation. But Council members must listen closely today to the representatives of those countries that condemn and oppose the continued pursuit of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and pay equal attention to those that do not. We must pay attention to which countries try to shield Kim Jong Un from criticism by pointing fingers at those of us calling out and defending ourselves from the regime's reckless behaviour. This should be an issue that unifies us.

We have all reaffirmed our commitment to the global non-proliferation regime time and time again. But since the beginning of 2022, the Council has failed to live up to its commitments because of the obstructionism of China and Russia. That is a relatively new phenomenon here and an increasingly troubling one, I have to say. If we go back and watch Council meetings from a few years ago, in 2017, every Council member condemned or opposed the unlawful actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We used to stand together, and we used to stand united.

Let me be clear, the United States and our allies have not changed our positions. We have always been committed to defending against the continued pursuit of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and our defensive joint military exercises are not new. So, what changed? Why are some in the Council now offering up excuses for the pursuit of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea?

Last month, senior Russian and Chinese officials stood beside Kim Jong Un for a celebration of the regime's ballistic missile advancement — I repeat, a celebration. The nuclear threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is growing, and Russia and China are not living up to their responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Instead, they are celebrating violations of Security Council resolutions and continuing to block Council action. While the Democratic People's Republic of Korea refuses entry to international aid workers, who could help alleviate the suffering of the North Korean people, the regime invites foreign leaders to Pyongyang to show off its unlawful weapons development.

I want to reiterate that the United States remains committed to diplomacy, publicly and privately. At senior levels, we have repeatedly urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in dialogue. I offer that to the Ambassador today. We are prepared to engage in diplomacy. We have made clear that we have no preconditions for engagement and are prepared to discuss any topic of concern to his Government. But the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has still not responded to our offers.

We must return to an era in which we used our collective voice to curb nuclear proliferation. We must unequivocally denounce the unlawful behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We must call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully and faithfully implement all relevant Security Council resolutions. We must address the global revenue-generating activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that fund its unlawful weapons programme.

Division only empowers the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Let us therefore work together once again to confront this pressing threat to international peace and security.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

Albania strongly condemns the launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regime of a space vehicle carrying the country's first military reconnaissance satellite. This is Pyongyang's second failure in two months to put a spy satellite into orbit. We further condemn the announcement by the regime of a third attempt of this kind in October.

Despite the fact that such efforts have failed so far, the biggest and the most worrisome aspect of all of this is the regime's failure to comply with its obligations under international law. Such actions and statements are in violation of Security Council resolutions that prohibit North Korea from testing any technology that can be used to build ballistic missiles; the regime openly challenges these resolutions. We deplore that the regime has immured itself into a posture of defiance to the international community and continues to pursue its efforts to strengthen and modernize Democratic People's Republic of Korea's military capabilities, in a display of egregious behaviour that exacerbates the volatile security situation across the entire Korean peninsula. We echo the Secretary-General's call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease these acts and swiftly resume dialogue without preconditions.

Today's meeting is yet another important occasion, at a critical time, for the Security Council to come together and show unity, promoting the clear and strong message that enough is enough. Security Council resolutions are not concept notes, non-papers or talking points. They are mandatory legal documents, with which the regime has an international obligation to comply. Therefore, attempts to show understanding for the regime's provocative and escalatory actions or whatever efforts that are undertaken to protect it on its dangerous course have the direct and proven effect of emboldening the regime on its erroneous course. They are the same as providing Pyongyang with a licence to breach Security Council resolutions, violate a comprehensive sanctions regime and remain an unwarranted threat to peace and security.

Let us face the truth that such a conciliatory approach has failed in practice. It has not helped to bring the regime closer to fulfilling its obligations, nor has it led to any de-escalation. In short, it has

not brought any sense of security to the people of the Korean peninsula. Quite the contrary, that approach has convinced the regime that it could get away with committing crimes. This is unacceptable because it is wrong and dangerous. The warmongers in North Korea must know that actions have consequences.

We regret that the voice of the majority of Security Council members, which is calling for the Council to react to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's illegal, unprovoked and reckless actions, has not so far been taken into consideration. By being disunited on this issue, the Council is failing its mandate and is not discharging its core responsibility. We therefore reiterate our position that not talking the talk to the North Korean regime when it persists in its defiant, escalatory and dangerous behaviour is not a contribution to peace and security. In this respect, we wonder about the real impact and usefulness of the Russian Minister of Defence's visit to Pyongyang amid suspicious and illegal arms deals with a country that is threatening its neighbours.

That is why, more than ever, we believe that the situation requires the Security Council to respond with diplomatic tools and a strong unified response. We do not have to wait for the worst to happen before we react. This is one of the best cases for fully exploring prevention efforts. Such efforts must be fully explored.

All of North Korea's neighbours, including Japan and the Republic of Korea, need to be assured that the Council takes the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regime seriously and is determined and committed to responding in a prompt and proper way. Just a few days ago, in this Chamber, we discussed the dire and worsening humanitarian and human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that has resulted from the deplorable path chosen by its regime to deny its population food they need and provide itself weapons they do not (see S/PV.9398).

In concluding, let me reaffirm that we will continue to advocate and support genuine efforts to address the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through collective preventive diplomacy and ensure that the regime ends its weapons-of-mass-destruction, ballistic and nuclear-weapons programmes fully, transparently, comprehensively and irreversibly. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to give diplomacy more than just a chance. It is high time for the Security Council to come together again,

speak with one voice and be united in a clear response as soon as possible.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, for his briefing. I acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at today's meeting.

Ecuador strongly condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's new failed attempt, on 23 August 2023, to launch a satellite. My delegation sympathizes with the people of Japan for the risks they faced with this launch.

This act is a further example of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's flagrant violations of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council prohibiting any kind of launch using ballistic-missile technology. On 2 June 2023, in this very Chamber, the majority of Security Council members condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's first attempt to launch a military reconnaissance satellite (see S/PV.9336). Only three months later, we are faced with this new situation, which again challenges the actions of the Security Council.

On 21 June 2023, the Foreign Ministers of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization issued a statement in which, *inter alia*, they declared that:

“the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its preservation for peaceful purposes must be the immutable political norm for states and a universally recognized international commitment”

and further, pledged:

“to take every possible measure to prevent outer space from being turned into a battlefield and to ensure the safety of space activities”.

That is why we expect those States' condemnation of this launch, which is undeniably a violation of international law, the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolutions 2087 (2013) and 2270 (2016), and resolutions of the General Assembly. Ecuador also recalls the importance of observing the basic principles for the peaceful use of outer space, set forth in the Treaty on Principles Governing the

Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

My delegation demands that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully comply with its obligations under the resolutions of the Security Council, refrain from further attempts to launch satellites using ballistic technology, and resume cooperation to achieve the goal of sustainable peace in the region as well as its complete and verifiable denuclearization.

In conclusion, I reiterate the call for the Security Council to strive for unity and undertake a dialogue based on good faith that will allow for a diplomatic and political solution to be found for the Korean peninsula.

**Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Khiari for his briefing.

On 24 August, North Korea once again attempted to launch a military satellite. That attempt, like the one on 31 May, is a flagrant violation of international law. France strongly condemns that provocative and destabilizing action, which deliberately violates Security Council resolutions and international law and represents a triple threat: to international peace and security, to the integrity of the international non-proliferation regime and to the authority of the Council.

Since 2009, the Security Council has repeatedly called on North Korea to refrain from ballistic missile activities designed to be capable of delivering nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Given the close similarity of the technologies used in space launches and ballistic launches, this launch bears witness to the already worrisome progress made by North Korea in its ballistic missile programme. It demonstrates the determination to continue the escalation of recent months, which have seen an unprecedented acceleration in launches and an increase in irresponsible statements made by Pyongyang.

The Council cannot remain inactive and must respond in unison to the new violation of its resolutions. We will not accept North Korea becoming a nuclear State. France will not accept the trivialization of such a threat to regional and international peace and security.

As such, it is essential that all members of the Council ensure that no support is provided to North Korea for the further development of its nuclear and ballistic programmes. We must collectively continue to call for de-escalation and the resumption of dialogue

without conditions with a view to North Korea's complete, verifiable and irreversible abandonment of its nuclear and ballistic programmes, in line with Security Council resolutions.

France therefore urges North Korea to comply with its international obligations without delay and to return to the negotiating table by responding to the offers of dialogue that have been presented to it on several occasions.

In the light of North Korea's provocations, which threaten regional and international peace and security, the Council must be exemplary and united to ensure the implementation of its resolutions and to combat in particular the circumvention of sanctions.

**Mr. França Danese** (Brazil): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing.

Brazil joins the international community in condemning the use of ballistic missile technology in the launch of a satellite launch vehicle by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 24 August.

While fully recognizing the right of all countries to pursue peaceful space programmes, Brazil stresses the imperative for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to strictly comply with all of its obligations under international law and Security Council resolutions. As we noted in June (see S/PV.9336), the Chollima-1 rocket uses engines similar to those used in the liquid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missile Hwasong-15. That constitutes a clear violation of resolution 2094 (2013), which prohibits the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from conducting "any further launches that use ballistic missile technology" (*resolution 2094 (2013), para. 2*).

Brazil will continue to make efforts to promote a meaningful engagement that can contribute to lowering tensions and reducing the risks of escalation. At the same time, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I reiterate, must comply with all its international obligations, just as any State must, by abiding by international law in general and the Charter of the United Nations specifically.

We urge all parties to exercise restraint when responding to space launches and stress that meaningful engagement, not isolation, remains our best path towards a Korean peninsula that is peaceful, stable and free of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Camilleri** (Malta): I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his informative briefing.

Malta is deeply concerned about the recent attempt by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to launch a satellite and strongly condemns it. The launch is another blatant violation of resolution 2397 (2017), which prohibits the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from conducting any launch using ballistic missile technology.

We are gravely concerned about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's intention to conduct another launch in October, which would constitute yet another act of defiance and destabilization.

Even though this launch has failed, such tests can help the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to improve its technology and advance its programme. Malta joined others in calling for this meeting as it recognizes that those acts increase tensions and risk further destabilizing the region. They pose a serious threat to international peace and security and erode the global non-proliferation regime.

We recall that the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2397 (2017). At the time (see S/PV.8151), it had also established that it would act and place further restrictions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in case of new violations.

We remain firm in our belief that the Council cannot be silent in the face of these provocations. Persistent inability to act would simply undermine the Council's credibility as the guarantor of international peace and security.

We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease all provocative acts, engage in meaningful dialogue and adhere to its obligations under Security Council resolutions. It must completely, verifiably and irreversibly abandon its ballistic missiles programme and return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

Malta also remains deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in the country, the restrictions to humanitarian access and the grave human rights violations perpetrated by the regime, as highlighted during last week's discussion (see S/PV.9398). Serious humanitarian needs continue to be ignored by the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Instead, it chooses to allocate resources to its costly ballistic missile and illegal weapons programmes.

Malta calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to restore access to the United Nations and other humanitarian actors in order to provide its population with the aid it requires.

In conclusion, we reiterate that our shared objective is peace and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In order to achieve that, we need a strong and united Council. Divisions and inaction will only postpone our objectives indefinitely.

To that end, Malta remains supportive of a Council product to express the Council's determination in ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing. I welcome the participation of the representatives of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at this meeting.

On 24 August, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made yet another failed launch of a military reconnaissance satellite. It triggered Japan's local alert system in Okinawa. This was yet another grave violation of Security Council resolutions and a brazen effort to further expand the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's military programme. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has said it will try again.

Claims that so-called provocations, or rather, legitimate and transparently declared military exercises, cause those launches are baseless. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not reacting: this is part of a long-established, clearly defined plan that has required extensive scientific and technological investment.

Kim Jong Un said it himself in January: the National Aerospace Development Administration will launch the first military satellite at the earliest date possible by pushing ahead with the full preparation for a reconnaissance satellite and its vehicle, a major task to boost the political, ideological, military and technical strength of his army.

The Council must take action. All of us here have signed and ratified and support the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. All of us should be committed to the full implementation of Security Council resolutions. We have a responsibility to uphold those obligations.

Our words and deeds matter. They are the message we send to the world about our commitment to

preventing nuclear non-proliferation globally. We took note of the presence of permanent members, including the Russian Defence Minister, at a weapons exhibition of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with intercontinental ballistic missiles on display. Interactions such as those signal support for United Nations-sanctioned weapons programmes. The United Kingdom urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease the launches, to return to dialogue and to take credible steps towards denuclearization and peace on the Korean peninsula. We hope its presence at this meeting is a step forward in that regard.

The biggest victims of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's military programme are the North Korean people. Resources are diverted away from their basic economic needs. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should open its borders and engage with the United Nations.

All United Nations States Members have an obligation to fully implement Security Council resolutions, including sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I call on all members of the Council to reiterate their condemnation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, in line with their responsibilities as United Nations Member States and signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

**Mr. Ishikane (Japan):** I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing.

It is regrettable that we are here yet again to discuss the same issue as we discussed in June and July concerning the latest intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launch (see S/PV.9336 and S/PV.9376). North Korea's series of actions — including this week's launch using ballistic missile technology, which flew directly over the Japanese archipelago — severely threaten the peace and security of Japan, the region and the entire international community. Those aggressive acts are flagrant violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions and pose a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan joins the Secretary-General in strongly condemning North Korea for the recent launch.

This is not about the right to use outer space. This is not about exercising the right to self-defence. This is about violations of Security Council resolutions.

This is about the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In the face of North Korea's unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, the Council has adopted many resolutions prohibiting any launch using ballistic missile technology. That is why the Secretary-General and the majority of Council members condemned the satellite launch at our June meeting, regardless of whether it carried a satellite or not and regardless of whether it failed or not. Nevertheless, North Korea has continued to ignore and deny its international obligations, and instead chose to pursue its military ambition according to its five-year plan. It has even shamelessly announced its intention to conduct another launch in October.

North Korea is disrespectful towards the Council and the Charter of the United Nations. Let me remind fellow colleagues once again that our solemn duty as responsible Council members cannot be fulfilled by simply sitting and discussing the matter from our seats in the Chamber. It requires taking concrete actions when confronted with violations of the Council's own resolutions. Furthermore, our responsibility is to never celebrate a military parade that includes ICBMs, which demonstrates a clear violation of Security Council resolutions. I urge all Council members to be aware of our responsibilities and to restore the unity that was shown in 2017.

Last week, when we gathered in this Chamber to discuss the human rights situation in North Korea, we all heard shocking remarks from a North Korean defector:

“The Government turns our blood and sweat into a luxurious life for the leadership and missiles that blast our hard work into the sky. We used to think that the money spent on just one missile could feed us for three months, but the Government does not care.” (S/PV.9398, p.5)

Let me ask again: if the money spent on launching numerous satellites and missiles towards neighbouring countries had been spent on people in North Korea instead, how many would have been fed? How many lives would have been saved? It is high time for North Korea to stop developing unlawful weapons of mass destruction and stop disseminating propaganda to justify its actions and instead prioritize improving the welfare of the people in North Korea.

Japan urges North Korea not to conduct further launches and once again calls on North Korea to immediately and fully comply with all relevant resolutions and resume substantive dialogue with the countries concerned towards complete denuclearization. The path to dialogue remains open.

**Ms. Koumby Missambo** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at this meeting.

We are meeting again this afternoon following the attempted launch of a spacecraft by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My country condemns that act, which has raised the level of tension and fear to such an extent that some neighbouring countries have had to put their missile defence systems on alert.

It is more necessary than ever that the Council mobilize in the face of the scale of the threat hanging over the Korean peninsula and seek to open up a way out of the vicious circle. The status quo is not a viable option, because it increases the risk of a catastrophe with potentially irreparable consequences. All parties must return to the negotiating table to find a solution that will guarantee security for all and peaceful coexistence in the region.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Gabon is opposed to any use or threat of use of that category of weapons. Given the current international security context, we are very concerned about the trivialization of nuclear risk. This generation is seeing a clear retreat from the ground we have covered and the hard-won gains we have made in the fields of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The current trend, which runs completely counter to history, is unacceptable.

We call on the parties to de-escalate, to refrain from unilateral initiatives and to give priority to dialogue in order to achieve a lasting solution to the situation. Tensions on the Korean peninsula must be reduced and confidence restored for talks to resume. We urge all parties to avoid any provocative actions or rhetoric that could fuel antagonism.

Finally, I would like to call on those countries that have influence over the protagonists to encourage the resumption of negotiations. I would also urge

the International Atomic Energy Agency to keep diplomatic channels open with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to do its utmost to restore and guarantee the confidence needed between the parties for peaceful negotiations.

**Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing and welcome the participation of the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea in our deliberations.

Switzerland has observed with great concern the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's second attempt to launch a military reconnaissance satellite using ballistic missile technology. We therefore welcome the convening of today's meeting. The Security Council must not remain passive in the face of those tests which, together with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme, constitute a threat to international peace and security.

Allow me to highlight three points.

First, Switzerland condemns any launch using ballistic missile technology as a violation of the relevant Council resolutions. As we discussed in our meeting at the beginning of June (see S/PV.9336), the issues of rocket payload and early warning are not decisive in such a situation. The latest launch is therefore a violation of international law. In view of that, as members of the Council, it is our duty to condemn and respond to it. We reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to renounce any future attempts to launch ballistic missiles.

Secondly, while the obligations arising from the resolutions apply first and foremost to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they also apply to all States, which are required to effectively implement the sanctions of the Security Council. Furthermore, as members of the Council and as States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we all have an obligation to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The attempt to publicly legitimize the development of the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea requires our continued vigilance, and we must be committed to disarmament and to maintaining the nuclear taboo.

Thirdly, we must not forget the suffering of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The serious and systematic violations of human rights

and the impunity of the perpetrators must cease. We welcome the first signs of a relaxation of the heavy restrictions put in place by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in connection with the pandemic. Those restrictions are a major obstacle to humanitarian aid and to respect for and the exercise of human rights. We stress that the opening of the borders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must go hand in hand with rapid, safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid. To that end, the entry of international personnel into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is of the utmost importance.

The Council plays an indispensable role in encouraging dialogue, de-escalation and the quest for diplomatic solutions. They are essential instruments for facilitating the implementation of a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula. We have a common goal and a shared responsibility in that respect. Switzerland will remain committed to moving forward in that direction.

**Mrs. Alhefeiti** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Khaled Khiari, for his valuable briefing.

The United Arab Emirates joins the Secretary-General in his strong condemnation of the attempt by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to this week once again launch a military reconnaissance satellite, following its previous attempt in May. Those events constitute a source of grave concern and a dangerous escalation on the Korean peninsula.

We also express our concern about the announcement by official media of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the country would conduct yet another launch, after the failure of the ballistic missile carrying the satellite. In that regard, we recall that the Security Council has banned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from carrying out launches using ballistic missile technology. We therefore strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its illegal, dangerous and provocative activities.

In the context of today's meeting, the United Arab Emirates would like to stress the following three points.

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must stop terrorizing and scaring civilians through its repeated launches. We stress that the pre-launch notification issued by the relevant authorities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea does not give

any legitimacy to such operations. It is regrettable that civilians in the Okinawa region of Japan had to deal with warning alarms at 4 a.m., caused by the dangerous and illegal actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reaffirm our solidarity with the neighbouring countries and peoples and with the entire region.

Secondly, the Council must send a unified message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, stressing that it must comply with Security Council resolutions and stop conducting such tests. We reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to diplomacy and dialogue. A path to complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, including a return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is the only way for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the international community to achieve peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

Thirdly, continued attention must be paid to the dire and alarming humanitarian conditions in which the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea live. While the exemption mechanism created by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) allows the delivery of aid to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the grave situation on the ground requires those concerned in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to prioritize the interests of the people and take measures to alleviate their suffering, including by allowing the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to return to the country to provide humanitarian relief assistance.

In conclusion, the Security Council was more effective in maintaining international peace and security when it stood together, especially on the issue of the Korean peninsula by taking a unified stance to curb the illegal pursuit of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United Arab Emirates is fully prepared to discuss ways to again unify the stance on that dossier in order to enable the Council to play its role in maintaining international peace and security.

**Ms. Kesse Antwi** (Ghana): Let me begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his helpful briefing to the Security Council. We welcome the participation of the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea and look forward to their statements.

Consistent with Ghana's position on the nuclear weapons and ballistic technologies programme of the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we strongly deplore the second attempted launch of a military satellite by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in three months. The launch, which involved technologies related to the intercontinental ballistic missile programme, violates multiple Security Council resolutions banning any launch using ballistic technologies. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abate its long-term ambitions for a nuclear weapon capability and embrace the international community's call, as well as the unconditional offer of the United States for dialogue in resolving the interconnected concerns of the dispute relating to the Korean peninsula.

In the meantime, we strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further launches using ballistic missile technology and to comply with its international obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions. The envisaged and acceptable solution to the problems on the Korean peninsula cannot include a State with nuclear capabilities, or the possibility of there being a nuclear arms race in the region.

We therefore underscore the need for a resumption of constructive and credible dialogue between the parties concerned and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to find an enduring, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the issues on the Korean peninsula, in a manner that recognizes regional and global security concerns as well as those of the parties.

We have a responsibility to steer the region away from the path of catastrophe and preserve peace and lives on the peninsula. As a founding member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, it is Ghana's hope that the resolution of the situation on the Korean peninsula will contribute to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

**Mr. Fernandes** (Mozambique): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General, for his briefing.

We acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

Mozambique echoes the concerns expressed by fellow Security Council members in the light of the recent missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect and adhere

to Security Council resolutions and to recommit to denuclearization and a peaceful resolution of the persistent crisis on the Korean peninsula. We call upon all stakeholders involved in the matter of non-proliferation on the Korean peninsula to act with the utmost responsibility. It is imperative to avoid any unilateral actions that may exacerbate the already tenuous détente in the region.

It has been clear that continued tensions on the Korean peninsula have the potential to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security in the region and the world at large, at a time when complex challenges emerge and multiply. Mozambique therefore appeals to all members of the Security Council to reflect on the best actions to be taken in order to seek peace and harmony on the Korean peninsula and the region and avoid the reoccurrence of the use of force or any other retaliatory measure. We must intensify our diplomatic engagement and seize every available window of opportunity to re-engage all parties in constructive dialogue and accept the important goodwill role of the international community.

Mozambique reiterates its belief that all peaceful forms of seeking peaceful solutions to the tensions on the Korean peninsula have yet to be exhausted. The Council has the primary responsibility to contribute to international peace and security through all peaceful means possible. Therefore, the Council must not spare any effort in urging the parties, as well as recommend to them, to take the best path to peace. We call on the Council, which shoulders the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, not to vacillate in the pursuit of a permanent resolution of this serious threat to peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula and the region.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This meeting yet again this month exemplifies the brazen approach of the United States presidency in using its seat on the Security Council to advance its narrow, self-serving politicized agenda. While the presidency requested an open briefing on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its national capacity, together with Albania, Ecuador, France, Japan and Malta, it did not bother to create even the semblance of consultations among Council members on the need for such a discussion and its format. They were the ones who requested this meeting, and they immediately scheduled it themselves. By taking such actions, the United States shows that it does not care at all about the

opinion of other Council members. Clearly, convening this meeting today is nothing more than a cynical and hypocritical attempt by the United States and its allies to ramp up pressure on Pyongyang and divert attention from the reckless escalatory actions of Washington and its allies in the region, which account for the real source of threats to international peace and security. At the same time, in its customary fashion, Washington is hypocritically shifting the blame on others, while refusing to acknowledge any responsibility for the escalation in North-East Asia. Like Caesar's wife, of course, the United States is beyond suspicion.

We are surprised by the fact that not even a single mention of the destructive military activity of the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan in North-East Asia was made by Assistant Secretary-General Khiari in his briefing. We regret that such an important aspect has been completely disregarded by the Secretariat, which should take an impartial and objective stance. Russia has consistently opposed any military activity that poses a threat to the security of the Korean peninsula and its neighbours. Meanwhile Washington and Tokyo, together with Seoul, have regularly escalated the situation around the peninsula. In particular, the allies' regional military exercises are aimed at achieving that goal within the framework of their concept of so-called extended deterrence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the scale of which is steadily increasing. That is a blatantly provocative approach that further complicates the possibility of initiating dialogue, which is essential to strengthening regional security.

Let us not forget the series of United-South Korean aerial exercises in June, which included United States fighter jets and strategic bombers, and the presence of a United States nuclear submarine in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula. The attempts by the United States and its allies to create new "boundary lines" in the region to please Washington through the establishment of closed alliances, as well as plans to move part of NATO's military infrastructure there, have had an extremely negative impact on the situation. There are also concerns about contradictory messages from United States allies in North-East Asia — Tokyo and Seoul — concerning the purported strengthened cooperation with Washington in nuclear development, which could easily be taken to mean that United States nuclear weapons might be deployed on their territory and that those countries might develop their own.

Certain Council members have attempted to sweep all of those circumstances under the rug, although they ultimately are the primary reasons for the deterioration of the situation in the region. Every delegation here today is well aware of that, but there has been no attempt to ameliorate the situation. We note that the pressure on Pyongyang has not been exclusively limited to military activity. Unfortunately, the Security Council has also been used as a platform. The convening of a meeting last week on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see S/PV.9398), which was absolutely pointless from a practical standpoint, further attests to that. In order to promote their biased agenda, those who organized the event disregarded the mandate of the Council, which is not mandated to deal with human rights issues.

Against that background, it is not surprising that tensions in North-East Asia, as well as the entire Asia-Pacific region, only continue to rise. We would like to recall that the relevant Security Council resolutions call for seeking ways to find a political and diplomatic settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula. The latest developments involving the peninsula point to the need for immediate de-escalation, abandoning provocations and returning to negotiations. In that regard, we once again draw attention to the fact that the Russian-Chinese action plan aimed at a comprehensive settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula, involving concrete steps in all problem areas, remains on the table. Undoubtedly, its implementation will require the establishment of a mutually respectful dialogue and the consideration of the legitimate concerns and rights of all States involved, including, of course, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, at this point in time, we have observed an unwillingness to do so, owing to the positions of individual Council members, whose statements continue to hardly pay attention to finding realistic ways to resolve the cumulative issues of the subregion.

The Russian-Chinese draft political-humanitarian resolution remains relevant as well. There is no doubt that its potential adoption would bring much more benefit than such a priori dead-end measures, such as the demonization of Pyongyang and the inhumane policy of increasing sanctions pressure. We are convinced that the policy of harsh restrictions has long been obsolete. It fundamentally contradicts efforts to restore trust, which should be the primary concern of the Security Council. We believe that the Council will

actually be able to overcome this urgent problem if all members stand ready to work in an unbiased manner, while responding to threats to international peace and security and taking into account all related factors, rather than blindly continuing to recite hackneyed propaganda clichés.

As always, for our part, we stand ready to engage in constructive and substantive discussions on ways to concretely address the full range of problems on the Korean peninsula, in the same way we encourage other Council members to do so.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari for his briefing. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea at this meeting.

For some time, tensions on the Korean peninsula have been intensifying. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has conducted multiple launches, and certain parties, including the United States, have continued to take part in military activities. Such a state of affairs, which China would prefer to avoid, is worrisome. Although, as usual, certain countries are attempting to place all the blame on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it must be pointed out that the recent launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are closely linked to the military activities of certain countries. Earlier this year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea showed restraint for a period of time and repeatedly appealed for ending hostile acts. But the country's calls failed to be addressed seriously. I am not saying all this to attribute the deteriorating situation to only one particular side, but rather to encourage the parties concerned to take a rational and a balanced perspective in the face of the current wave of tensions on the peninsula. The parties concerned should ask themselves: What went wrong? What do we do next? What should the Security Council do?

First, the peninsula issue is not simply an issue of nuclear and missile programmes. In essence, as a legacy of the Cold War, it is a political and security issue. At its heart is a lack of mutual trust and the absence of a peace mechanism. The key to the issue lies in the question of whether we want war or peace.

The United States has maintained a long-standing hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and has continued to exert pressure on the country, which therefore feels increasingly insecure.

Last month, an American strategic nuclear submarine, after a long 40-year hiatus, showed up again on the peninsula. And last week, the United States, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, insisted on scheduling a meeting to consider the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see S/PV.9398). In fact, as we speak, the United States and its allies' Ulchi Freedom Shield joint military exercise is in full swing. Those acts will not help to further mutual trust or to build a peace mechanism on the peninsula, but will only aggravate tensions, increase the risk of confrontation and conflict and could even ultimately lead to war.

Secondly, the final resolution of the peninsula issue depends on sound interactions among the major countries and a conducive regional environment. Looking back at the history of the peninsula issue, it is not difficult to realize that diplomatic efforts on the peninsula issue can be effective only if the major countries of the region maintain generally stable and cooperative relations. In recent years, certain countries have used the peninsula issue as a pretext to deliberately create tensions, incorporate the peninsula into an Indo-Pacific strategy, strengthen alliances and partnerships and significantly increase military presence in the region, thereby seriously jeopardizing the strategic security interests of the peninsula and the neighbouring countries. Such practices, fraught with Cold War mentality, only provoke bloc confrontation and undermine mutual trust among the parties, serve their own geopolitical interests and run counter to the goal of maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula and advancing its denuclearization.

Thirdly, dialogue and negotiation are the only way to help the peninsula out of the security conundrum. Over the years, there were times when diplomatic efforts brought hope to the peninsula. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea participated in denuclearization activities. However, the changing policy of one of the countries concerned, its failure to implement the action-for-action principle and to deliver on commitments made in dialogues resulted in the loss of those opportunities to resolve the issue. Consequently, the situation on the peninsula has become increasingly more complex and tense. Under the current circumstances, all parties should exercise restraint and stay calm, avoid mutual provocation and try to do more to resume dialogue and to ensure peace and stability.

Fourthly, the Security Council should play a constructive role in easing tensions and promoting a political settlement. The draft resolution on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea jointly proposed by China and Russia in the Council is aimed at generating goodwill and positive signals to encourage a political settlement of the peninsula issue. Regrettably, irrelevant countries have chosen to ignore the reasonable proposals of China, Russia and other countries and are obsessed with the magical power of sanctions and the leveraging of pressure. In the statement she just delivered, the representative of the United States made groundless accusations against China and Russia's positions on the peninsula issue. Given where we are, the Council needs unity, not fragmentation or confrontation. Its actions should be constructive and not hinder a political settlement of the peninsula issue. The irrelevant countries should not use the Council's platform to increase tension and escalate the situation, but rather to come up with practical actions and concrete proposals to respond to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's legitimate concerns and to make efforts and create the conditions for a resumption of the dialogue.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that China's position remains unchanged, that is, it is committed to the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula, to the denuclearization of the peninsula and to finding solutions through dialogue and consultation. We stand ready to continue close communication with the relevant parties and to play a constructive role in finding a political solution to the peninsula issue and in realizing enduring peace and stability in North-East Asia.

**The President:** I shall now make a further statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

We reject the disingenuous claims by Russia and China that the United States is acting in a hostile manner. United States-allied military exercises are routine, they are lawful, and they are defensive in nature. And unlike the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ballistic missile launches, they are not prohibited by Security Council resolutions.

As a reminder, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had actually conducted six intercontinental ballistic missile launches in 2022, before the United States and the Republic of Korea resumed their large-scale exercises in August of that year.

I want to recall what I said in my statement, that we should pay attention to what other members of the Council are saying. Thirteen out of 15 countries on the Council are calling for an end to the development of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Thirteen out of 15 are calling for an end to their tests. And 13 out of 15 are calling for unity in the Council. If there is not unity in the Council, it is not because of the 13 countries. It is because of the two countries. And I do join in calling for unity of the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

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

**Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*):** We will listen to the statements of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, I will not take much of your time, Madam President, but I would like to quickly respond to the statement by the United States.

Just now in my statement, I pointed out that certain countries habitually blame the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the tensions on the peninsula, which runs counter to the fact that the launching activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are closely related to the intense military exercises of the United States and its allies. Those military exercises are not what the representatives of the United States claim, namely, that they are routine, legitimate and defensive in nature. It is not that simple. Recently, the scale and frequency of those exercises have reached a record level. And the United States and its allies have also used strategic bombers and nuclear submarines in the peninsula in those exercises. Although the United States claims that it is willing to engage in unconditional dialogues, when it comes to actions, it continues to tighten sanctions and exert pressure. I would like to ask, in that context, how can the dialogue be resumed?

Everybody calls for unity in the Security Council. Of course, China hopes to see unity in the Council. However, that kind of unity requires the efforts of all parties. China stands ready to maintain close communication with the parties concerned and to make constructive efforts in that regard.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Song Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The satellite launch was the exercise of the legitimate right of an independent and sovereign State, which is undeniably recognized under international law.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued navigational warnings in advance to ensure the transparency of the satellite launch, as well as the safety of ships and aircraft. Moreover, the satellite launch caused no harm to the security of the neighbouring country.

As we have made clear time and again, our launch of the reconnaissance satellite is an exercise of the legitimate right to self-defence to deter the ever-increasing hostile military acts of the United States and its followers. At the same time, such a launch is aimed at building our capabilities for self-defence.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Security Council has convened a meeting, under a separate agenda item, to take issue with our satellite launch, in contravention of its mandate to maintain international peace and security, thereby incurring further shame for itself and disgracing its reputation. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea sounds a serious alarm over — and condemns in the strongest terms — the abnormal practice at the Security Council of declaring our legitimate right to launch a satellite illegal.

At a time when fierce competition for space resources is unfolding among national Powers, it cannot but be a disgrace for the United Nations, which represents 193 States Members of the United Nations, that the Security Council is questioning solely the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's satellite launch while making a false equivalence between a satellite-carrier rocket and an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

Calling on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by the unlawful resolutions of the Security Council, which has been reduced to being a tool of the United States to implement its aggressive strategy of world hegemony, is a brigand's demand that all sovereign rights be conceded to that belligerent party, the United States. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has never recognized the Security Council resolutions that infringe upon the rights of

a sovereign State, nor will it ever be bound by such resolutions in future.

With regard to the illogical argument made by the United States that our satellite launch includes technologies directly linked to an ICBM programme, it makes no sense that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be persistently seeking to acquire ICBM technology through satellite launches given that it already operates an ICBM force. No one can deny that, even now, the United States and the military gangsters of the Republic of Korea are turning the Korean peninsula into an area with the potential for an immense thermonuclear war while clamouring for regime change in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and engaging in the large-scale Ulchi Freedom Shield joint exercise, which implicates theoretical pre-emptive nuclear strikes on our State. Peoples of the world are witnessing the stark reality that the United States strategic reconnaissance assets, which it claims to feature advanced technologies, are frequently flying in the skies above the waters around our territory with the aim of tracing, confirming and monitoring targets for a pre-emptive strike. Let me ask a question: is there any country that would remain idle when another technically belligerent party gravely threatens its security environment?

The Security Council should be aware that its unfair, biased and irresponsible actions are now driving the situation in the Korean peninsula and North-East Asia further towards catastrophe. If it really intends to contribute to peace and security on the Korean peninsula, the Security Council should call into question the manoeuvres of the United States and its followers, which conduct large-scale nuclear war exercises that mobilize several hundreds of thousands of armed forces and sophisticated offensive weapons of all sorts, and threaten the entire Asia-Pacific region, including North-East Asia. The Council should also condemn Japan's heinous crime against humanity that will jeopardize in the extreme the safety and security of humankind and the maritime ecological environment with its decision to discharge nuclear-contaminated water containing a large quantity of radioactive materials.

The more the United States and its followers increase hostile pressure on and military threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the more vigorously, courageously and unfailingly the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will exercise its legitimate rights as a sovereign State, including through

military reconnaissance-satellite launches to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests.

In conclusion, the international community should be vigilant about and raise its voice against the danger and gravity of the unlawful arbitrary attempts by the United States and its followers to prevent the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from exercising its sovereign rights.

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

**Mr. Joonkook Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening today's open briefing of the Security Council. My gratitude also goes to Assistant Secretary-General Khiari for his briefing.

The Republic of Korea condemns in the strongest possible terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of a so-called reconnaissance satellite on 24 August local time, which flagrantly violates multiple Security Council resolutions. Any launch that uses ballistic-missile technology, regardless of its success or whatever payload it may carry, can contribute to the further advancement of ballistic-missile technology. That is why prior to 2017 the Security Council unanimously adopted — with no abstention or opposition — a great number of resolutions that prohibit any launch using ballistic-missile technology by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The 24 August launch clearly demonstrates how routinely the Democratic People's Republic of Korea flouts with contempt the solemn decisions of the Council, which all States Members of the United Nations have agreed to accept and carry out, in accordance with Article 25 of the United Nations Charter.

Just a week ago, the Security Council held a public meeting on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see S/PV.9398). Today another Council meeting on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is being held, this time on its launch using ballistic missile technology. Together, these two agenda items accurately capture the very nature of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issue. A holistic approach is needed to better understand the true nature of these agenda items and, accordingly, effectively address them.

The late father of the current leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once mentioned, in the year

2000, that it cost about \$300 million to launch a satellite. According to that estimate, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be spending nearly \$1 billion on satellites by the end of this year if it conducts a third launch of its so-called satellite in October, as it announced it would do two days ago. If we add all the missile launches by North Korea this year, the figures would be incomparably much higher than \$1 billion.

A few days ago, the top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reportedly rebuked his own Prime Minister and other senior officials for their irresponsible handling of the recent flooding that inundated farmlands. Yet their scarce resources continue to be diverted to the development of weapons of mass destruction. These resources would have been better spent if they had been used to address humanitarian needs and help the country's undernourished people, which North Korea failed to do again with this launch.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country to have conducted a nuclear test in the twenty-first century. It is also the only country that joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and then openly developed nuclear weapons in defiance of its obligations under the Treaty. It is also the only country that explicitly targets specific countries as it continues to test various types of ballistic missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles. Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country in the world that continues to develop nuclear-weapon and missile programmes while blatantly ignoring the great suffering of its own people. I need not remind the Security Council that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is funding its weapons of mass destruction programmes through illegal activities, such as malicious cyberactivities, including hacking and theft in cryptocurrency markets, and forced labour by exploited workers dispatched overseas.

We have noticed in recent days that, after a long lockdown, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is opening its borders. Railroad and maritime traffic are slowly increasing, and several North Korean commercial flights Beijing to Pyongyang took off from for the first time in three years.

In the light of those new developments, there should no longer be any excuse for not repatriating all workers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in other Member States' jurisdiction, as stipulated in article 8 of resolution 2397 (2017). All such workers

should have been repatriated by the end of 2019, but tens of thousands still remain overseas. All of them need to be returned without further delay.

It is regrettable that some Council Members are still confusing the cause and effect of the situation unfolding in the Korean peninsula. As we have repeatedly pointed out, for more than three decades the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has developed its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programme based on its own playbook. It is astonishing to see some delegations repeating the false claim of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the root cause is the so-called hostile policy of the Republic of Korea and the United States. There is no such thing. The Republic of Korea and the United States have, time and again, provided numerous security assurances to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in various forms. Pyongyang's ever-growing threats are the very reason we are strengthening extended-deterrence cooperation with the United States, not the other way around.

It is our duty, as a responsible Government, to protect the lives and safety of our people from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's increasingly menacing threats by maintaining a robust combined defence-and-deterrence posture. As stated in the Camp David principles last week, the Republic of Korea, the United States and Japan will remain committed to the complete denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to dialogue and diplomacy with no preconditions.

Under the current circumstances, the unified voice of condemnation by the international community and the faithful implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions by all the States Members of the United Nations are the only way to pressure Pyongyang into reconsidering its ill-advised behaviour and policy.

We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop provocative actions, which endanger not only the world, but also itself, and to respond positively to our call for dialogue.

Our united action is essential to de-escalate the tension on the Korean peninsula and change the course of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

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

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made a reference to the water treated by the Advanced Liquid Processing System. Although I do not see the relevance of that argument to today's topic, I would like to make clear that this matter should not be subject to political discussion. We cannot accept any baseless allegations that lack scientific evidence. Japan remains fully committed to upholding transparency by providing information based on scientific evidence.

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

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I did not intend to make a statement, but just now the representative of Japan made reference to an issue on which I would like to explain our position.

China is strongly opposed to the Japanese Government's unilateral actions — in disregard of the objections of the international community and in defiance of public opinion — of discharging nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean and thus, transferring that nuclear threat to the whole world. The deliberate discharge of the nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean has no precedent, and there is no internationally recognized standard for its disposal. For a long time, serious concerns have been expressed with regard to the impact of such water on food security, people's health and the maritime environment.

The legitimacy and legality of such actions are called into question. We urge the Japanese Government to correct its erroneous behaviour and to stop discharging that water into the ocean. We urge it to engage in sincere dialogue with the stakeholders and countries concerned and to be responsible in its discharge of the nuclear-contaminated water.

**The President:** The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

**Mr. Song Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to take the floor again to correct some points made by the Japanese delegation.

The regrettable discharge of the nuclear-polluted water into the ocean, is directly related to the mandate of the Security Council. The discharge of nuclear-polluted water into the ocean is clearly a criminal act of destroying the ecological environment of the ocean

and threatening the existence of humankind. The regrettable discharge of nuclear-polluted water into the ocean is a typical manifestation of the two-faced, double-dealing attitude of Japan, which talks about a nuclear-free world.

Because it has been scientifically verified that the so-called “clean water” filtered through the Advanced Liquid Processing System still contain a large quantity of radioactive material, the terrible discharge of nuclear-polluted water into the ocean is absolutely unacceptable. In the interest of the safety and future of humankind, Japan should immediately reverse its decision to discharge nuclear-polluted water into the ocean.

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

**Mr. Ishikane (Japan):** I thank the presidency for giving me the floor.

With regard to the remarks put forward by our Chinese colleagues and the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they use

the words “contaminated water”, “threatening the ecological system” and so forth. I think that when they use words such as “contaminated water” they must be clear on the scientific basis. Why is it contaminated? Is it because the water discharged from Japan contains more nuclides than the label that is admitted by international norms and rules? Is it because the discharged water from Japan includes more nuclides than the level included in other parts of the world?

This is very technical, so I do not want to delve into the details, but I have to make clear that the water treated by the Advanced Liquid Processing System is sufficiently purified until the concentration of radioactive materials other than tritium is below the regulatory standard. The water will then be diluted by more than 100 times before it is gradually released into the sea. After dilution, the released water will be far below the regulatory standard, including with regard to tritium, and beyond three kilometres from the power plant, the concentration of tritium and the other nuclides will be the same as those already found in seawater.

*The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.*