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Seventy-ninth year

9653rd meeting

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Huang/Mr. Sangjin Kim	(Republic of Korea)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mrs. Dime Labille
	Guyana	Ms. Benn
	Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
	Malta	Mrs. Frazier
	Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield/Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

**Expression of sympathy on the passing of
Mr. Saulos Chilima, Vice-President of Malawi**

The President: At the outset of the meeting, on behalf of the members of the Security Council, I should like to acknowledge the tragic loss of Mr. Saulos Chilima, Vice-President of Malawi, who perished in an aeroplane crash on 10 June. The members of the Council offer their condolences and sympathy to the families of all who lost their lives in the accident, and to the Government and people of Malawi. I ask that all who are present now stand and observe a minute of silence in remembrance of Vice-President Chilima and the nine other passengers who lost their lives.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The President: The representative of China has asked for the floor.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Charter of the United Nations clearly provides that the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. China has always maintained that the Council is not the proper place to address human rights issues and should not intervene in country-specific human rights issues. We have always opposed the politicization of human rights issues and their use as a pretext for putting pressure on other countries. We live in an increasingly volatile world, where various crises and challenges are constantly emerging, and all kinds of conflicts and confrontations keep cropping up. The Council should focus earnestly on its responsibilities as mandated by the Charter and devote its limited time and resources to dealing with major and pressing issues that have a genuine bearing on international peace and security, with a focus on silencing the guns in Africa, putting an end to conflicts in the Middle East and restoring peace in Europe.

The current human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea does not constitute a threat to international peace and security, and pushing the Council to intervene in human rights issues there will not help to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. On the contrary, it will intensify antagonism and aggravate confrontation. China opposes the Council's consideration of the human rights situation

in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and calls for a vote on the provisional agenda for this meeting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today the international community is once again witnessing a shameful situation in which a small group of States is trying to use the Security Council as a tool to promote its own geopolitical agenda. We have never had any illusions about the fact that since all of Pyongyang's main opponents are members of the Security Council, they put all their energy into making unfounded allegations and criticizing the Pyongyang authorities on camera instead of seeking constructive ways to resolve the crisis on the Korean Peninsula. Their only goal is to once again distort the situation there and divert public attention from the true underlying causes of the accumulated security problems in the region. It is relevant to point out here that by doing this the organizers of the meeting are violating a number of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the commitment to developing friendly relations based on mutual respect and equal rights. We note in that connection the statement by the Group of Friends of the Charter of the United Nations, which was issued this morning.

The opponents of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are well aware that their initiatives are counterproductive, undermine whatever is left of Member States' faith in joint efforts regarding the protection of human rights and are purely for purposes of propaganda. However, that has not stopped them, and they have been asking for such meetings on an all-too-regular basis. The linkage between human rights and threats to international peace and security promoted by the initiators of today's briefing, especially in the context of the Korean Peninsula, is not just a manufactured one. Attempts to introduce non-mandated tasks into the work of the Security Council distract its attention, waste its resources, politicize the debate and thereby undermine the authority of the Council as a whole.

We are therefore asking for a procedural vote on the provisional agenda for this meeting, which was requested by the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The issue does not come under the mandate of the Security Council, and that is a matter of principle for us. We strongly urge other members of the Security Council to join us and vote against the provisional agenda.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea, I would like to make a brief statement before we proceed to the procedural vote on adopting the provisional agenda.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's human rights abuses and violations are inextricably linked to the regime's threats to international peace and security. Issues of human rights are therefore indeed about peace and security and do fall within the mandate of the Security Council. The regime relies on forced labour and the exploitation of workers in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea both domestically and overseas in order to develop weapons of mass destruction. What is shameful here is China and Russia's obvious effort to protect the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The regime represses the voices of any possible dissenters, ensuring that it can expend inordinate public resources on its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes without public objection.

The situation has only worsened since the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued its landmark report a decade ago (A/HRC/25/63). The report found that the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had committed systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights that in many instances amounted to crimes against humanity. The commission of inquiry also recommended that the Security Council receive regular briefings on North Korea's human rights abuses and violations as threats to international peace and security.

It is therefore critical that the Council support the adoption of today's provisional agenda. We call on all members to vote in favour of the adoption of the provisional agenda so that the meeting can go ahead.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom supports the decision of the presidency to hold this meeting on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and will vote in favour in the procedural vote.

First of all, we should be clear that the Security Council has a mandate to discuss any issues that relate to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's oppressive political and social system enables it to divert resources away from its people's most basic needs and to use those resources,

along with forced labour, to fund and generate revenues for its development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. That has severe and serious implications for international and regional peace and security.

In response to my Russian colleague, the Council regularly discusses human rights-related issues, owing to their impact on international peace and security, including in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, most recently in August 2023 (see S/PV.9406). We also note that of late Russia has frequently called meetings on human rights-related issues in Ukraine. I therefore encourage Council members to join us in supporting the prerogative of the presidency to hold this meeting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): To begin with a different aspect of the issue, in seeking to justify their attempt to undermine the mandate of the Security Council, our Western colleagues have predictably alleged that Russia has raised in the Security Council the human rights situation in a given area or region. I will come back to that point.

First, however, I want to say that in March, when Russia urged for the holding of an open briefing to discuss the consequences of NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia in 1998 (see S/PV.9587), our position was that any member of the Council can raise any question in the Council that relates to international peace and security. That position has not changed, although I want to underscore that it applies to cases where the proposed subject is directly related to the mandate of the Council. At the time even the most zealous opponents of convening a meeting on NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia did not risk affirming the opposite. But what relationship do human rights have to regional and global security? That is a separate subject to be discussed on specialist platforms with corresponding mandates and expertise.

With regard to Russia's convening of Security Council meetings on certain aspects of the Ukrainian crisis, which my British colleague described as being related to human rights, in this case the subject is not human rights issues as such but rather one that has a direct relationship to the reasons for the crisis and the prospects for resolving it. In the broader context, oppressing Russian speakers in Ukraine and declaring them second-class citizens were two of the key factors triggering the conflict. In this instance, the parallels drawn with the topic for today's meeting are categorically inappropriate.

The President: In view of the comments made, I intend to put the provisional agenda to the vote now.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

China, Russian Federation

Abstaining:

Mozambique

The President: The provisional agenda received 12 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention. The provisional agenda has been adopted.

The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Volker Türk, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Elizabeth Salmón, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Mr. Gumhyok Kim, civil society representative.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Türk.

Mr. Türk: Thank you for this invitation, Mr. President. I welcome the attention that the Council pays to the precarious human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to working through the interconnections between human rights, peace and security and development.

The protracted nature of this situation is trapping people in unmitigated suffering. It is also a factor behind instability, with wider regional ramifications. We cannot divorce the state of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from considerations around peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, including the increasing militarization on the part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Today the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a country sealed off from the world — a stifling, claustrophobic environment where life is a daily struggle, devoid of

hope. And I am asserting that against a backdrop of a number of factors that we have been observing recently.

First, with regard to deepening repression of the right to freedom of movement, in recent months we have seen a very partial reopening of the border, allowing limited movement, with some citizens returning home, a small number of diplomats entering and some travel by Government delegations and sports teams. For the population at large, however, the brutal reality remains one of strengthened border controls. It is now almost impossible for people to leave unless they have the Government's permission. Extremely few people secure that permission. But leaving one's own country is not a crime — on the contrary, it is a human right recognized by international law.

Last year, approximately 200 escapees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea arrived in the Republic of Korea, less than one fifth of such arrivals before the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and of those who did arrive, only a small percentage had actually left the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after the COVID-19 border closures in early 2020, the majority having been in third countries. In short, we are witnessing a situation where people can no longer leave, even when they are in the most desperate of circumstances or in peril of persecution. One consequence is that divided families are even more divided. No departures means no reunification with families abroad. Even the briefest meetings between separated relatives no longer occur, because official efforts on that front have been stalled for years. And phoning or sending money to family in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now practically impossible. Yet that is exactly what would build some sense of confidence and hope. That arbitrary interference in family life causes deep anguish. I urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reopen the possibilities for families to connect and ultimately to be together.

Secondly, repression of freedom of expression has worsened, particularly as a result of the enforcement of three laws. One deals with the consumption of foreign media deemed to be "reactionary thought". Another criminalizes the use of language not in line with the Pyongyang dialect, while one third focuses on forcing young people "to conform to a socialist lifestyle". All of those laws impose harsh punishments for the exercise of fundamental human rights protected by international law, including the right to freedom of expression and to

access and impart information, and going as far as to punish parents for the actions of their children.

Article 7 of the country's law on rejecting reactionary ideology and culture is a particularly chilling example, authorizing severe sanctions, including capital punishment, for the offence of introducing, viewing or disseminating so-called reactionary culture. Put simply, people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea risk death for merely watching or sharing a foreign television series. That law squarely violates freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and the right to take part in cultural life, putting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in clear breach of its obligations under international law. I urge the country to repeal those oppressive laws and institute a moratorium on the use of the death penalty throughout its legal system with a view to its abolition, consistent with the overwhelming global trend in that regard.

Thirdly, the socioeconomic conditions of life in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have become intolerably harsh. I am particularly troubled about the lack of access to food. Every single person interviewed by my Office has mentioned that in one form or another. In the words of one of them, "it is very easy to become fragile and malnourished because there is nothing to eat". While the Government seems to be making some efforts to address food security, it is at the same time shutting down the majority of small-scale markets, the *jangmadang*, and restricting what vendors can sell in the remaining markets. The increasingly centralized food production and distribution are undermining access to food. Reports indicate that almost half of the population has been food-insecure in recent years, with child wasting increasing in some provinces. I call on the Government to uphold the right to food of all of its citizens, without discrimination, and to take advantage of offers of international cooperation to that end.

Fourthly, forced labour persists in many forms inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Government also exerts a high level of control on workers sent abroad, many of whom have been interviewed by my Office. They describe a life of terrible hardship — work that is often physically dangerous, a scarcity of food and health care, extreme levels of surveillance, physical violence and the confiscation of up to 90 per cent of their wages by the State. Moreover, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment and a lack of fair trials are ongoing tactics of repression.

I have also consistently raised the tragic issue of enforced disappearances — both inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and involving citizens of other countries, notably the Republic of Korea and Japan — perpetrated over the past 70 years. Painfully, the full truth about the fate of those people, who we estimate number more than 100,000, remains unknown to this day. I again call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its international obligations to return those individuals to their long-suffering families, or reveal their fate and return their remains to their loved ones.

Accountability for those long-standing, serious and widespread violations must be a priority. Ten years ago, the United Nations commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea called on the Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court, a call that I endorse. In addition, I urge States to explore the avenues for judicial accountability that may be at their disposal, including under accepted principles of extraterritorial and universal jurisdiction, in accordance with international law.

As for non-judicial routes, those must remain part of our collective effort to bring redress for victims. Truth-telling, memorialization, the reparations issue and guarantees of non-recurrence must all be advanced. And I want to recognize the enormous contribution of civil society in consistently documenting violations and supporting victims. Next year, in 2025, at the request of the Human Rights Council, I will be providing a comprehensive report on the human rights situation over the past 10 years. Given the precarious human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, there are compelling reasons for recognizing the international protection needs of those seeking protection outside the country. It is essential that the principle of non-refoulement be scrupulously observed. We have received troubling reports of people being deported back to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in clear violation of international law. Our monitoring has confirmed that individuals forced back in that manner are subjected to torture, arbitrary detention or other serious human rights violations.

It is important to ensure that the international community continues to pay close attention to this very troubling human rights situation. The Council is uniquely placed to address the growing isolation of the country, which is a driver of both human rights

violations and regional instability. It is really critical for the international community to be creative in finding ways to revive dialogue. We have seen some positive signs recently from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its engagement with the international human rights system, which is welcome. The upcoming universal periodic review session in November and the 2025 review process of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities both provide opportunities to be grasped.

The landscape of misery, repression, fear, hunger and hopelessness in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is profoundly alarming. All the paths that lead out of it start with making a U-turn out of the dead end of self-imposed isolation, opening the country, re-engaging with the international community, enabling people-to-people contact, embracing international cooperation and focusing on the welfare of all. I urge the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to flip the orthodoxies and overcome its isolationist mindset, which only breeds deeper and deeper distrust, setting off a never-ending spiral of groupthink at the expense of a more prosperous and secure future for its people. Human rights in all their dimensions offer a solution and a way forward.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Salmón.

Ms. Salmón: In August 2023 I had the honour to brief the Security Council on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see S/PV.9398). My update today reflects the increasing security tensions on the Korean Peninsula driven by two key decisions taken by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — first, the inclusion in its Constitution in September 2023 of its policy of nuclear-weapon development to a higher level, and secondly, the announcement in January 2024 that it would no longer pursue reunification with the Republic of Korea. The suspension of the 2018 comprehensive military agreement by both parties also underlines the seriousness of the issues we are facing this year.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued prioritization of its military, nuclear and missile programmes places a high military burden on its people and disproportionately affects those who are most vulnerable, such as children and women. The resources available for realizing human rights are reduced, the exploitation of labour to finance

militarization becomes rampant and, as a result, the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights is often overlooked.

Looking back at the past four years of border closures, the deterioration of the human rights situation is undeniable. We are facing what is probably the worst humanitarian crisis in the country since the disastrous famine of the late 1990s. The international community is once again paying insufficient attention and the plight and voices of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are going unheard. In parallel to strengthening border controls, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has further tightened restrictions on fundamental freedoms. It has repressed small-scale commercial subsistence activities, deeming them anti-social behaviour, and it has reintroduced a monopoly on the sale of rice and corn. That has deprived many people of their livelihoods and prevented them from buying food. Women, who are often the main breadwinners and largely involved in those commercial activities, have been particularly affected. Many vulnerable people, including the elderly, have died due to a combination of malnutrition, disease and a lack of access to health care.

Humanitarian assistance has been very limited for a long time. A majority of children and pregnant women have not been able to receive essential vaccinations. The Ministry of Public Health reported recently to UNICEF that only one in five children treated for diarrhoeal disease had received oral rehydration salts, showing that the country is unable to provide the basic minimum primary health-care services to its most vulnerable population. Starvation and malnutrition are expected to worsen when food availability is at its lowest, between harvests.

Moreover, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea appears to be further constraining access to information, freedom of expression and freedom of movement inside the country through the introduction of new laws with provisions for the death penalty for minor crimes. For example, under the Pyongyang Cultural Language Protection Act, enacted in 2023, serious cases of speaking or writing in the style of the so-called puppet State — a reference to the Republic of Korea — could be punishable by death.

Prior to the coronavirus disease outbreak, many women in the area escaped from the country, fleeing economic or other hardships, some of them without knowing that they might be subject to trafficking.

However, the strengthened border controls have made escape nearly impossible, even in situations where people have no options for earning a living for themselves and their families. Since the border closures in 2020, only a handful have managed to leave. People are isolated and silenced inside the country without access to information from outside. Similarly, escapees who have lived outside the country for a long time continue to face the risk of forcible repatriation, torture and other human rights violations on their return. I witnessed the desperation of families when an escapee, now resettled, urged me to save her mother from imminent risk of repatriation. Her palpable fear for her mother's fate was heartbreaking.

The human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a serious and urgent concern. I call on Council members to pay due attention to the country's people, who are striving to survive as we speak. We need to act. Those who are responsible for human rights violations must be held accountable. The international law is clear — States have the primary duty to protect and promote the human rights of all within their jurisdiction. In the face of international crimes, however, the unwillingness or inability of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its duty must trigger other States' obligation to act. Accountability goes beyond establishing criminal responsibility. It encompasses a multifaceted effort involving individual prosecutions, reparations, truth-seeking and institutional reforms. States hosting victims are strongly encouraged to fulfil their right to comprehensive reparations, including by providing compensation and psychosocial support. At the same time, the international community should strengthen its engagement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. I encourage Member States to make the most of the forthcoming universal periodic review of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Human Rights Council in November. The return of the United Nations country team should also be prioritized.

The prolonged isolation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should serve as a stark reminder of the threats that a hostile approach, disengagement and further militarization pose to both peace and justice. The situation profoundly affects the prospects for victims to reunite with their loved ones, as well as the return of victims of international abductions and their families' right to know their fate. Those are critical concerns, as

no dialogues on reunification or on reuniting separated families have been held for several years.

I welcome the fact that the Council is putting the dire human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on its agenda as a threat to international peace and security. The gross human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have continued and are indeed worsening during this unprecedented isolation. It is incumbent on us to put an end to them and ensure that the State and its highest authorities stop evading accountability. The lack of respect for the rule of law in the country has persisted for too long. Council members should discuss what the most expedient accountability measures for human rights violations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could be, including referring the situation to the International Criminal Court. We must acknowledge the suffering of a people living in absolute isolation. We must refocus international efforts on halting the ongoing state of tension and impunity within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I believe that can be done if human rights are put front and centre and agreements are reached with all the parties involved.

The President: I thank Ms. Salmón for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kim.

Mr. Kim: I am joining you today in this great city of New York, a symbol of freedom, to speak on behalf of the millions of North Koreans who are denied humankind's most basic freedoms. I am nervous about speaking to the Council, but I will take courage by thinking of my friends in my homeland who dream of having the freedom to say what I am about to say.

I was born in Pyongyang to an elite family that was loyal to the Kim dynasty. My grandfather, father and all the adults in my family were members of the Korean Workers' Party. We were well-off and privileged. From an early age I enjoyed benefits available only to a select few and entered Kim Il Sung University at the age of 18. My aim was to become a diplomat for North Korea, so in 2010 I went to study in Beijing, an opportunity that only we political elites could dream of. At the age of 19, I saw a world for the first time that was different from everything I had learned. In particular, the Internet enabled me to learn about my country's history and realize the horrific truth about North Korea that had been kept hidden from me. The country that supposedly had nothing to envy in the world was nowhere to be

seen. In its place were political prison camps, deaths from starvation, public executions and people risking their lives to escape.

Discussing my homeland with students from around the world made me further realize how many basic facts I had been kept ignorant of, and my loyalty to my leaders turned to a deep sense of betrayal. I realized that the Kim family that I had wanted to serve were not my heroes, but dictators denying countless people their freedom just to build their own power, wealth and honour. I became determined to share that new-found knowledge with other North Koreans, and I started having dangerous discussions with other friends studying in Beijing. The most important thing we could do was to study history, philosophy, fundamental rights and democracy, and return to North Korea to share what we had learnt with other North Korean youths. We believed that if everyone knew the truth, North Korea would have to change. Even in the most impossible circumstances, we university students dared to dream of basic rights for all North Koreans. We knew how dangerous the road ahead would be, but as we studied together and had fierce debates, we gave one another the courage to believe in the possibility that we could make a new society. But one day in the winter of 2011, our group was discovered by the North Korean authorities. I had to flee Beijing to South Korea to avoid arrest.

I survived, and found freedom. But that freedom came at a great cost. It has already been 12 years since I defected, and I have still had no contact with my family. The teachers who taught me, my close friends and so many people I knew have faced the suspicion and repression of the North Korean regime. The painful fact that I was the only one to survive and reach freedom torments me to this day. But I cannot give up. The plans that I made with my fellow North Korean students to change our homeland are still alive.

Please stand on the side of the North Korean people, not the dictatorship. We need to accord the same level of importance to the people's rights as we do to nuclear weapons and missiles. We need to make the North Korean authorities more accountable for their policies, which amount to crimes against humanity. We need to show Kim Jong Un that ruthlessly repressing people and focusing on nuclear weapons is no longer the way to maintain his leadership. I also want to make an appeal to Kim Jong Un himself. I ask him to listen carefully. Rule through coercion and control alone cannot last long. Support built through indoctrination and

misinformation is temporary, and when people realize the truth, that support quickly turns to anger. Insecure power leads to an obsession with power, and tyranny easily breeds further tyranny. He needs to free himself from the chains of tradition and to make a different choice. It is not too late. I am asking him to allow North Koreans to live in freedom, to allow them their basic rights so they can live full and happy lives. I am asking him to turn away from nuclear weapons and threats and restore his country to the family of nations so that all North Korean people can live prosperous lives. If North Koreans have enough to eat and the freedom to travel the world, they will respect his leadership without being forced to. That is true leadership.

I hope that we can be reminded of the power of the international community, and the responsibility that comes with that power. The people in this Chamber and the Governments they represent have the ability to create change. The North Korean people need them to use that ability. It is time for action, not just for listening and speaking. The international community should increase its efforts to impose accountability in order to pressure North Korean officials to refrain from actively committing human rights violations and to make them aware of the long-term consequences of abusing their power.

Secondly, the international community should use all available opportunities to raise human rights issues in dialogue with the North Korean authorities, emphasize the importance of human rights cooperation in improving relations with all countries, and make sure that it is not demoted to the status of a secondary issue below security concerns.

Lastly, the international community should significantly step up its investment and efforts to support the North Korean people's right to information by increasing the flow of news, media and new technology into North Korea. A changed information environment will be a crucial factor in transforming my homeland into a more normal society.

Before I finish, I want to send a message to the young people of North Korea, in our language.

(spoke in Korean)

(spoke in English)

What that means is that the night is darkest and coldest just before dawn. But no matter how dark and frightening the night may be, the sun will rise again.

The future of North Korea is in our hands. Freedom and democracy is not a gift that can be delivered by someone else. We have to achieve it for ourselves. And I believe we can do it.

I am proud to share the news with the Council that last year I became a father and started a new family in freedom. But it breaks my heart that I cannot tell my mother that she is grandmother to a beautiful baby boy. We cannot resign ourselves to passing on our problems to the next generation. I look forward to the day when I can take my son back to a changed and open North Korea. I will show him where I grew up, and I will show my mother how bright and healthy her grandson is. With support and action from the people and the Governments represented in this Chamber, we can bring that day forward — the day when every North Korean man, woman and child can be free.

The President: I thank Mr. Kim 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 the Republic of Korea for calling this important meeting, and I would also like to thank all the members of the Security Council who voted to keep this item on the agenda. I want to thank the briefers, High Commissioner Türk and Special Rapporteur Salmón, and I particularly want to thank Mr. Kim. I know that being here and sharing his experience comes with real risk to his personal safety. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's regime would rather the world did not know of its cruelty. But he should know that the United States, along with many other Member States, is grateful. We are grateful for Mr. Kim's selflessness, courage and conviction. His story deserves to be told. It must be heard. We heard him, and we thank him.

I have made it a priority during my tenure as Ambassador of the United States to the United Nations to meet with other brave defectors here in New York and around the world and to elevate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's human rights abuses to the top of the Security Council's agenda. That is why, during my Council presidency last August, the United States, joined by Albania and Japan, held the first open meeting on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in more than six years (see S/PV.9398). And it is why we welcome the efforts to make this meeting a regularity on the Security Council's agenda, because protecting human rights is

not a distraction from safeguarding peace and security. The two are inextricably linked, and it is time for us to treat them as such. Nowhere is that nexus more salient than in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where substantial evidence and documentation have directly linked the regime's mistreatment of citizens to its investment in unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has also engaged in acts of transnational repression, including the abduction of foreign nationals. When I was in Japan I had the honour of meeting the families of abductees, and I heard the pleas of parents and siblings who have not seen their loved ones in decades. I join the High Commissioner in calling for their return. I was reminded that for every person holding out hope for reunification, there are others whose loved ones died before they could be reunited again.

That repression and totalitarianism, proliferation and gamesmanship, make each and every one of us less safe. And as we heard just now, it has a profound human cost. Today the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to deny individuals their rights to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion or belief. It continues to execute, torture, arrest and physically abuse individuals engaged in any "unauthorized" activities, including those related to religious beliefs and practices. And it continues to enforce the extreme and unnecessary measures implemented on a pretext of protecting citizens against the coronavirus disease. It enforces a shoot-to-kill order at the border and has increased internal controls on freedom of movement. There are new laws and regulations enforcing repressive ideological control, further limiting freedom of expression and cutting off access to all information outside the country.

Those draconian laws come with equally draconian punishments — public trials without fair trial protections, arbitrary detention, including the collective punishment of three generations of family members, and public executions, including of children. When I was in the Republic of Korea earlier this year, I met with an escapee who had seen those executions. She spoke of neighbours who were caught while attempting to flee, brought back to their village and tortured and executed in front of their family and friends. She said that her father tried to shield her eyes as her friend's father was murdered in front of her. It is hard to imagine such

horrific conditions. They drive people to try to escape, knowing the dire and brutal consequences should they fail. And yet we have seen how restrictions, including those imposed during the pandemic, have lessened people's access to basic necessities such as food and medicine even further. Of course, those restrictions are not just cruel, they are arbitrary. The same rules used to block humanitarian workers are suddenly non-existent when it comes to welcoming Russian tourists and foreign groups that promote the regime's ideology.

It should be easy for every single one of us to condemn that unjust and inhumane activity. And yet there are members of the Council who not only fail to speak out against the repression, they actively embolden it and encourage the cycle of abusing human rights while strengthening weapons programmes. In particular, Russia's veto of the mandate renewal of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) (see S/PV.9591) has deprived the international community of critical, unbiased reporting on the regime's flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions, which remain in effect. Russia's veto undermines international security by emboldening the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to act with further impunity. The attempt by both Russia and China to block this meeting today is another effort to support the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and is also emboldening it in its actions. We are working in earnest with our partners from Japan, the Republic of Korea and elsewhere to ensure that Member States continue to receive credible, independent reporting on the implementation of the sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the light of Russia's veto.

It is our responsibility, as members of the Council, as human beings, to speak out against a regime that chooses weapons over the welfare of its own people. Just as Mr. Kim has demonstrated remarkable strength and courage by being with us here today, we too must show that same courage and take action to confront the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's brazen brutality head on in order to fight for peace and security, justice and freedom. That is how we can create a better future for the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a safer future for us all.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): First of all, I thank the Republic of Korea for holding this meeting, and I appreciate those Council members who supported this meeting.

We deeply appreciate Mr. Türk and Ms. Salmón for their informative and insightful briefings, and we deeply appreciate Mr. Kim for sharing his heartbreaking and courageous first-hand account of the situation in North Korea. Upon listening to those briefers' reports, we can instantly recognize the significance and the necessity of the Council, as the organ responsible for international peace and security, addressing the situation in North Korea.

Ten years after the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shed light on human rights violations in North Korea, we find that grave violations still persist, as emphasized by today's briefers. That persistence is deeply regrettable, particularly since the majority of the Council urged North Korea to take concrete steps to improve its human rights situation last August, during the first formal Council meeting on this issue in nearly six years (see S/PV.9398).

As highlighted by the briefers, North Korea's human rights violations are inextricably linked with its pursuit of its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, as essential resources are diverted for that purpose at the expense of the people's welfare, despite their significant unmet needs. According to the report *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023*, published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, nearly half of the population — a staggering number of 12 million people — is undernourished in North Korea.

The consequence of all that is an unmistakable increase in the threat to international peace and security. It would be enough to grasp the gravity of the situation when we consider the fact that the Council has repeatedly convened briefings under the agenda item Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea, owing to North Korea's relentless unlawful launches. We most recently convened a briefing on the issue on 31 May (see S/PV.9643), following North Korea's launches on 27 and 30 May. Another alarming fact is that, just last year, North Korea launched five intercontinental ballistic-class missiles, posing a clear and serious challenge not only within the region, but to the international community as a whole. Furthermore, in that regard, Japan condemns in the strongest possible terms the unlawful transfer of arms from North Korea to Russia for use in attacking Ukraine. The transfer of those weapons, in clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, supports Russia's war of

aggression. We continue to closely monitor what North Korea gains in return.

Against that backdrop, the failure to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) due to Russia's veto would make it easier for North Korea to evade relevant Security Council resolutions. We fear that that would embolden North Korea to continue its unlawful activities with a sense of impunity by further exploiting the people there. The interlinkage of human rights violations with international peace and security cannot be more obvious in the case of North Korea. It is imperative to emphasize that addressing that issue is fundamentally central to the mission of the Council.

I would also like to draw attention to a grave human rights violation perpetrated by North Korea, namely, abductions. Japanese citizens, including a girl as young as 13, were kidnapped by North Korean agents. The act of international abduction infringes upon a nation's sovereignty and jeopardizes the well-being and safety of its citizens.

It has been a long time since the abductions issue occurred. The abductees have remained trapped for almost half a century, while the victims and their families have advanced in age, with many, tragically, having passed away. I thank Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield for touching upon her experience of meeting with the abductees' families in Tokyo today. Japan is not alone in that suffering. The report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/25/63) acknowledged that nationals from the Republic of Korea, China, France, Lebanon, Malaysia, Romania, Singapore and Thailand have also endured that agony. The urgency of that situation is undeniable. I call upon the international community to unite in a concerted effort to secure the immediate return of all abductees.

In conclusion, Japan strongly urges North Korea to take tangible measures to address serious human rights violations, cease its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, fully comply with all relevant resolutions and return to dialogue. At the same time, the Council must continue to meet under this agenda item until North Korea recalibrates its stance on human rights and genuinely commits to fostering international peace and security.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank the High Commissioner and the Special

Rapporteur for their briefings, and I extend my thanks as well to Mr. Gumhyok Kim for his courageous and moving testimony.

It is evident that widespread and systematic human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue. On the tenth anniversary of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, perpetrators remain largely unaccountable, and the North Korean people continue to suffer, as we have heard so vividly from our briefers today. As we have also heard, one cannot separate the human rights violations committed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from the threat that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses to international peace and security. The authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to divert resources away from their people in order to fund their illegal weapons programme, and those illegal weapons are financed through forced labour, as we have heard, from the pay of workers sent overseas, often into modern slavery. I urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to end those practices without delay. It is incumbent on all States Members of the United Nations to implement in full resolution 2397 (2017) — a resolution that was unanimously agreed by the Council and that includes obligations to end the exploitation of overseas workers.

We are witnessing forced repatriations, State-sponsored abductions and enforced disappearances, and the United Kingdom also recognizes the suffering of other nationals who have been abducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we call for their return. I also echo the call of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and urge all members to respect the principles of non-refoulement and not to forcibly return those who have escaped the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and who then face threats to their safety and human rights.

The 2014 report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/25/63) concluded that wide-ranging human rights violations taking place in the country might amount to crimes against humanity. Ten years on, the regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to refuse to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights or with the Special Rapporteur.

We urge the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to prioritize the rights of

its citizens over the illegal development of its weapons programmes, and we encourage it to ease border restrictions on the international community. The United Kingdom urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to use its upcoming universal periodic review to engage with the international community on human rights and implement lasting change and improvements for the people of North Korea.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I would like to thank High Commissioner Türk and Special Rapporteur Salmón for their insightful briefings. We are particularly thankful to Mr. Kim for sharing his moving personal experiences, which are invaluable for our understanding of the situation.

Malta welcomes the holding of this important meeting. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the landmark report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/25/63). The report recommends that the Security Council take action with regard to the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Those findings are all the more relevant today. Over the past years, the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued to deteriorate. The regime is responsible for a wide range of systematic and gross human rights violations, many of which may amount to crimes against humanity. Those systematic human rights violations are essential components of a totalitarian system that seeks to dominate every aspect of people's lives to achieve political goals. Furthermore, many of those violations have serious implications with regard to international peace and security. Through forced labour and the diversion of resources, the regime has rapidly advanced its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missiles programme. Malta strongly condemns all human rights violations perpetrated by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's regime and deplores the continued prioritization of military spending over the real needs of the people.

As Special Rapporteur Salmón noted in her report, restrictions on freedom of expression and other fundamental rights have been further restricted by Pyongyang. We also share her concerns that escapees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were forcibly repatriated and have subsequently been subject to torture and other inhumane treatment. In that regard, we echo her call on all Member States to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement. Moreover,

in his report, the Secretary-General highlighted that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea increasingly relies, "on forced mobilization of men and women, without remuneration" (A/78/212, *para. 12*). The use of forced labour, including abroad through overseas workers, is aimed at meeting State-set economic and military targets. In that connection, the Committee on the Rights of the Child also expressed serious concerns about the extensive practices of child labour. That is unacceptable, and Malta strongly condemns it.

Most worrisome, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's regime continues to blatantly violate its people's right to adequate food. The United Nations and other humanitarian agencies estimate that over 40 per cent of the population in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is food insecure and in need of assistance. Yet the regime continues to divert its scarce resources towards its unlawful and dangerous weapon of mass destruction programme. With every ballistic missile test conducted, the regime actively chooses to deprive its people of essential nutrition. That is unconscionable. It must stop.

We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programme and allow the re-entry of international humanitarian staff into the country, including the United Nations Resident Coordinator. Only then will it be able to carry out a rapid needs assessment and provide the people of North Korea with much needed humanitarian assistance.

It is high time to move beyond awareness and pursue accountability for those violations. In that regard, we fully align with the Special Rapporteur's recommendations. We echo her call to support initiatives by victims and civil society organizations and to adopt legislation that enables the exercise of universal jurisdiction.

We must promote a principled and sustained engagement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on human rights and the rule of law, since they are the essential foundation for any political solution. In that regard, we encourage all Member States to support and actively engage with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

To conclude, addressing gross human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not only a question of justice — it is also one of security. We can no longer allow systematic violations

that contribute to the advancement of the regime's unlawful weapons of mass destruction programme. That violates multiple Security Council resolutions, undermines the non-proliferation regime and threatens peace and security on the Peninsula and beyond. We call on the Council to shoulder its responsibility and take collective action.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I join my colleagues in thanking the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Türk, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ms. Salmón, for their briefings. We also thank Mr. Gumhyok Kim for sharing his story with us and for his courage.

As the High Commissioner for Human Rights said, peace and human rights are intimately connected. There can be no lasting peace without respect for human rights and the fight against impunity, and his briefing also starkly illustrated that link. The Council recognized in resolution 2171 (2014) that whether or not human rights are respected enables the risks of conflict to be detected in advance and prevented.

As has already been mentioned, in 2014, the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concluded that serious and systematic violations of human rights and possible crimes against humanity were being committed in that country. Ten years later the situation has deteriorated further. The list of those violations, such as arbitrary detention, torture and forced disappearance to camps of political prisoners, remains long. Strict control of the media and the enactment of repressive laws severely limit the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, regardless of borders. That repression, surveillance and coercion is worsening, creating a climate of fear with the aim of stifling fundamental freedoms.

That grave human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea threatens the stability and peace in the region and beyond. As the Government invests more in military programmes, the population is increasingly left behind. Limited public resources to meet the needs of citizens have a significant impact on the realization of their economic, social and cultural rights. Significant deprivation of food, health care, access to water and sanitation and decent living conditions demonstrate a flagrant underinvestment in the population. At the same time, the exploitation of the workforce to finance militarization is endemic.

That militarization weighs heavily on the population, particularly affecting women, children and the most vulnerable. There is a clear link between those human rights violations and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's pursuit of nuclear and ballistic weapons.

For all those reasons, Switzerland remains concerned about the serious and systematic violations of human rights and possible crimes against humanity committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We recall that human rights are universal, indivisible and inalienable. We also recall the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's obligation to put an immediate end to all violations and to respect its obligations under international law, including human rights law. Furthermore, we remind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its obligation to protect the human rights of its repatriated citizens, and urge all States to respect the principle of non-refoulement.

Ten years after the report of the commission of inquiry (A/HRC/25/63), justice for the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains elusive and the culture of impunity persists. Accountability is essential to ensure the rule of law and justice for the victims. That requires criminal prosecutions, reparations and non-judicial measures, such as truth-seeking and institutional reforms, while placing victims at the heart of those processes. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect its international obligations and investigate those crimes. At the same time, the Council cannot forget the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and must examine all the options at its disposal to ensure that human rights violations do not go unpunished.

We welcome the first signs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea opening its borders, but we underline that that must go hand in hand with access to humanitarian aid for the population. To that end, it is essential that humanitarian personnel have rapid, safe and unhindered access. That would also help to provide the population with a basis for improving their economic prospects.

Lastly, Switzerland calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to enter into dialogue and cooperate with international mechanisms and to grant access to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur and civil society organizations.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): Mozambique would like to start by conveying its deepest condolences to the people and the Government of the Republic of Malawi and to the bereaved family following the untimely demise of The Right Honourable Mr. Saulos Klaus Chilima, Vice-President of the Republic of Malawi, on that fated Monday, 10 June, in a plane crash deep in the hills of the Chikangawa forest in Malawi. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

I wish to thank Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for his important contribution to the subject matter under consideration. We also thank Ms. Elizabeth Salmón, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Mr. Kim for their perspectives.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1948, is a milestone document in the history of human rights. In its preamble, it asserts that recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Furthermore, the mandate of the Human Rights Council includes:

“[contributing], through dialogue and cooperation, towards the prevention of human rights violations and [responding] promptly to human rights emergencies” (*General Assembly resolution 60/251, para. 5 (f)*).

Mozambique calls for full compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and all instruments of that body relating to protection and human rights, which can play an important role in creating a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula must be dealt with in an integrated manner, mindful of the underlining factors. In navigating those challenges, a holistic approach that considers humanitarian issues, domestic politics and international relations is crucial. At the same time, we recognize that promoting sustainable peace requires addressing the underlying political, security and humanitarian dimensions holistically through diplomacy and dialogue. Genuine engagement to reduce tensions, build trust and ultimately achieve the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is essential. That is essential to the peace and security of the whole region.

Mozambique supports the continued efforts of Council members and the broader United Nations

membership in promoting and maintaining peace and security in the Korean Peninsula in accordance with international law.

In conclusion, let me underscore that all efforts of the members of the Council must focus on promoting dialogue and building trust between all parties. Resuming meaningful negotiations is crucial to making progress on denuclearization and improving the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone joins Mozambique in expressing its deepest condolences to the people and the Government of Malawi on the passing of its Vice-President, His Excellency Mr. Saulos Chilima, and others in the tragic plane crash. May their souls rest in peace.

I wish to thank Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Ms. Elizabeth Salmón, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, for their insightful briefings. And I also wish to thank Mr. Kim for the information he provided.

Sierra Leone is concerned about the dire human rights and humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, recognizing the urgent and serious need for appropriate action to address the situation. It is difficult to fathom how, since the report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/25/63), which was finalized 10 years ago, stating that systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations had been and were being committed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, its institutions and officials and that such violations constituted crimes against humanity, not much has reportedly changed to this day. It is time for the Security Council to give the appropriate serious consideration to that assessment and take active steps to implement the recommendations contained in the report and that of the Special Rapporteur (A/HRC/55/63) at the request of the Human Rights Council.

The humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is complex and intricate, characterized by both long-standing issues and recent developments. Food insecurity, limited access to basic needs, health-care concerns and the lack of access for humanitarian workers to provide essential aid are some of the compounding issues that have plagued the country, with its citizens facing acute food shortages

and other human rights violations. There is a strong need for a comprehensive assessment of the full extent of the human rights situation in the country, especially on its vulnerable population, women and children, who are at a greater risk and more exposed to its impacts.

We believe that strengthening the monitoring and documenting of the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to ensure accountability and to enhance engagement and capacity-building with the Governments of all States concerned, civil society and other stakeholders will maintain the visibility of the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and provide a viable solution that is targeted, participatory and sustainable.

The human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is linked with the threats to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. General Assembly resolution 69/188, for instance, highlighted the need to tackle the root causes of refugee outflows from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and prosecute those who exploit refugees through human smuggling, trafficking and extortion. We therefore commend the efforts of the Human Rights Council for strengthening the capacity and mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the field-based structure in Seoul through the provisions of funds and resources to carry out its field assessment. We look forward to the outcome of that initiative and its related product, with which a holistic approach can be employed to fully address the ongoing dire human rights situation.

Drawing upon that holistic approach, while we acknowledge the importance of the sanction's regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was established to persuade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, we are also aware of its unintended consequences on the lives of the citizens in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That brings up the question of conducting a holistic and comprehensive assessment of the political, socioeconomic and development aspects of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with a view to finding viable and long-standing solutions that will bring an end to that ongoing situation.

In closing, we echo the call of the international community on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations under

all relevant Security Council resolutions and to resume dialogue at all levels without preconditions in order to achieve a sustainable peace in the region. Finally, we also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to focus more on creating a more enabling environment for its citizens and to address issues that will enhance their socioeconomic well-being.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): First of all, I would like to convey our deepest condolences to the people and Government of Malawi on the tragic loss of Malawi's Vice-President, Mr. Saulos Chilima, and the delegation accompanying him. We extend our sympathy and compassion to their families and friends.

Algeria decided, finally, to vote in favour of holding of this meeting, a meeting on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, because this issue already exists on the list of agenda items of the Council, and Algeria's principle is that any member of the Council has the right to request a meeting, in accordance with rule 2 of the provisional rules of procedure. Therefore, we firmly believe that our discussion must be guided by the substance contained in the title of the agenda item adopted today.

My delegation would like to address the following points. At today's meeting on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Algeria reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality among Member States, peaceful settlement of conflicts and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. However, and while recalling that the three pillars of the United Nations are sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian issues, as well as peace and security, we must emphasize that the primary responsibility of the Security Council itself, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, is the maintenance of international peace and security.

Algeria attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of all human rights, at all times and everywhere. At the same time, it firmly believes that Member States have established dedicated bodies, which are mandated according to an existing, well-crafted division of labour. Hence, the Human Rights Council remains the appropriate body designed specifically for discussing human rights, in line with the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. The politicization of human rights within the Council could lead to biased implementation of international law, potentially aggravating conflicts

and exacerbating mistrust and isolation instead of tackling the fundamental causes of international crises and promoting international peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

In conclusion, in addressing the situation concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Algeria reiterates the necessity of constructive dialogue and international cooperation as the essential means to overcome challenges on the Korean Peninsula. Although we are mindful of the concerning atmosphere of tension and the fear of a possible conflagration on the Korean Peninsula — especially the fear of a nuclear conflagration — and although we continuously share our view in every discussion in the Council on the non-proliferation issue, I have to underline, however, that our focus today must not deviate from the core issue. The quest for a peaceful solution to the Korean Peninsula crisis must be guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate security concerns of all parties.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I want to welcome High Commissioner Volker Türk and Special Rapporteur Elizabeth Salmón to the Council, and I want to thank them for their valuable briefings. I also want to thank Mr. Kim for his testimony.

I would like to begin by stressing the essential role that the Council plays also when it comes to prevention. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is among the best-placed entities to offer us insights into often overlooked dynamics that can steer the Security Council's actions, and that is why I am happy that he is back in the Council.

We condemn the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, some of which may constitute crimes against humanity, according to the report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/25/63), which was presented 10 years ago. Sadly, as we have heard again today from the briefers, the overall human rights situation has not changed since the publication of that report. On the contrary, by many accounts it has further deteriorated. Slovenia therefore welcomes today's open briefing. The scale of human rights violations is horrifying and has wider implications for international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a demonstration of the intrinsic link between a domestic human rights situation and international peace and

security. The situation there is a stark example of how a system that grossly violates democratic and human rights standards at home eventually becomes a threat to international peace and security.

Moreover, those human rights violations are directly connected to the country's increasing militarization. Its authorities are relying on the exploitation of workers and widespread use of forced labour, including of schoolchildren, for advancing their unlawful nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile capabilities. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must respect its international obligations and strictly ensure the full implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions, with a view to abandoning its nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes, and ceasing all related activities immediately. We call on all States to respect the Security Council's sanctions in order to attain that goal.

Slovenia strongly condemns the persistent human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are particularly worried about the situation of women and girls. The country's long-standing human rights violations have recently worsened owing to drastic policies, initially linked to containing the coronavirus disease pandemic, that are still partially in force. The authorities are using border restrictions to delay and prevent the delivery of international humanitarian aid into the country, while at the same time the people are facing a serious lack of access to food. For that reason, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to allow immediate access for United Nations and other international humanitarian actors and ensure that the basic humanitarian needs of its population, such as access to food, medicines and health care, are met. We remain worried that no dialogue on the reunion of separated families has been held for several years. We are also concerned about escapees from North Korea who are at risk of being involuntarily repatriated, and we call for their international protection.

The culture of impunity for serious violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea unfortunately continues. Responsibility for ensuring accountability for such acts rests primarily with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, in the absence of such efforts, Slovenia supports exploring other options for accountability, including through national-level prosecutions based on the principle of universal jurisdiction as well as through referrals by the Security Council to the

International Criminal Court. We also welcome the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to encourage the use of non-judicial means of accountability such as reparations and memorialization.

Human rights are an integral part of building sustainable peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. We therefore call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to end its policies of self-isolation and engage with the international community. We encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to expedite the process of approval of the recently appointed Resident Coordinator, as well as to engage with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other United Nations mechanisms.

Ms. Benn (Guyana): Guyana joins others in expressing its deepest condolences to the Government and people of Malawi during this period of national mourning.

We thank High Commissioner Türk and Ms. Salmón for their briefings and take careful note of the testimony of Mr. Kim. Guyana supports the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures mandate holders and commends their important contribution to promoting greater respect for human rights and strengthening global norms and standards.

Guyana is concerned about the continued documentation of human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including restrictions on civil and political rights and economic and social rights. We have taken note of the Special Rapporteur's latest report to the General Assembly (A/HRC/55/63) and its emphasis on the interlinkages between human rights and peace and security, as well as women and peace and security. Given the centrality of human rights to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we appreciate this opportunity for a closer examination of the linkages that have been observed and their impact on the work of the Security Council. Human rights are inherent to all human beings and essential to sustainable peace and development. The 2030 Agenda commits us to leaving no one behind and is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights standards. Guyana therefore views promoting and protecting basic human rights as fundamental to attaining sustainable peace, security and development.

In that context, we note with growing concern the many reports of systematic and widespread human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including instances of enforced disappearances, international abductions, arbitrary arrests and restrictions on basic freedoms. We have also taken careful note of the reported impact that those violations are having on the already precarious humanitarian situation in the country and on the lives of women and girls. Regrettably, the situation has been made worse by prioritizing military spending over social protection, education and health care. Guyana agrees with the assessment of the Special Rapporteur that a victim-centric approach is critical to providing a more holistic view of the experiences of individuals whose rights have been violated.

We urge the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to enhance its commitment to promoting civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and pursuing a peaceful path to development that fully aligns with its obligations as a State Member of the United Nations. We also emphasize the importance of ensuring the equal participation of women in political and public decision-making. In that context, Guyana takes positive note of the indications that there has been some increase in the representation of women in Government bodies in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and emphasizes that women must be critical actors in all efforts to achieve sustainable peace. That includes all engagements in the context of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. Guyana has consistently encouraged a peaceful resolution to the mounting tensions and the security crisis on the Korean Peninsula and calls on all the parties to exercise maximum restraint. We stress that dialogue and adherence to the rule of law are the best paths to peace.

In conclusion, Guyana underscores the importance of respecting the human rights of all persons without discrimination and urges the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments. We also urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to consider acceding to other core international human rights treaties to which it is not yet party and to engage constructively in the next universal periodic review cycle in November. We hope that all recommendations accepted during the coming session will be fully implemented.

Finally, Guyana reiterates its support for the humanitarian exemption mechanism of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mrs. Dime Labille (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to join my colleagues in presenting France's sincere condolences to the people of Malawi.

I thank the High Commissioner, Mr. Türk, and the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Salmón, for their very insightful briefings on the situation in North Korea. I also thank Mr. Kim for his testimony and courage.

France fully supports the holding of this meeting. The Council must continue to address the massive and systematic violations of human rights in North Korea, which contribute to undermining regional peace and security, while at the same time the North Korean regime is pursuing its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes at a considerable pace, in defiance of the Council's resolutions, and increasing its provocations of its neighbours. I would like to emphasize two aspects.

First, the human rights situation in North Korea remains very worrying. The regime is systematically violating North Koreans' fundamental rights and freedoms through widespread ill-treatment, arbitrary detentions and arrests and the separation of families. We must also continue to stand up for the victims of enforced disappearance, including in South Korea and Japan. The Pyongyang regime refuses to cooperate with the various human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. Arbitrariness and impunity rule. France commends the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur, who have continued to document the human rights situation and the violations committed by the regime, despite their lack of access to the country. It is essential that we support their work and give them our full backing in carrying out their mandate.

Secondly, the humanitarian situation remains tragic. The population continues to suffer from food insecurity, alarming detention conditions and disastrous sanitary conditions. Almost 20 per cent of North Korean children are afflicted by what experts classify as moderate-to-severe stunting. France urges the regime to facilitate the return of foreign humanitarian personnel to the field.

North Korea must cease its grave violations. It must resume its cooperation with the United Nations and comply with international human rights law and international humanitarian law without delay. France encourages all countries to remind North Korea of its obligations in that regard and to respect the principle of non-refoulement for all North Koreans having fled their country. Lastly, we urge the regime to cease its repeated violations of Security Council resolutions and to return to the negotiating table.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the information provided by High Commissioner Türk and Special Rapporteur Salmón. We listened carefully to the testimony of Mr. Kim, the representative of civil society.

Peace, human rights and development are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, which is why they are the foundations of the United Nations. We hear that often, and it is true. Human rights violations destabilize that delicate balance, affect the other two pillars and weaken the multilateralism that as members of the Organization we all accept. My delegation is therefore deeply concerned about the violations and abuses committed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which have been documented by impartial reports of the Secretary-General and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. I think it is apposite in that regard to recall the General Assembly's condemnation, in resolution 78/218 of 2023, of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's long-standing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights and its diversion of its resources towards implementing its illicit nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes.

For its part, the Security Council, through its resolutions 2321 (2016), 2371 (2017), 2375 (2017) and 2397 (2017), has adopted a series of measures and has underscored the need for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect and ensure the welfare and intrinsic dignity of its people. Today we want to emphasize that urgent call. Unfortunately, far from implementing the Council's mandatory provisions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has intensified its weapons programmes to the detriment of the well-being of its citizens, whose needs are not being met and who are deprived of the most fundamental freedoms, as we have heard.

My delegation therefore once again urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect

its people's human rights and to stop diverting its resources to the illegal development of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes, which constitute a threat to international peace and security and have led to increased tension in the region and beyond. In line with the principles in the Charter of the United Nations, I therefore join the call to Council members to redouble their efforts in the urgent quest for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today our Western colleagues dealt yet another heavy blow to the reputation of the Security Council, which, according to its mandate, bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Yes, any Council member has the right to request a meeting on any issue, but that issue must fall within the Council's mandate. The Council does not cover discussions of human rights. While the world looks to the Council hoping for solutions to complex global problems, the Council is wasting its resources on groundless and deliberately politicized topics.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula is the biggest victim in that regard. The United States and its allies in the region are ready to consider any issues in the Security Council except those that really need settling if the situation is to be normalized. Meanwhile, the United States, which is located across the Pacific Ocean and thousands of miles from Korean shores, continues to expand its military activity in the region together with Japan and the Republic of Korea. The military drills of "decapitating strikes" against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other numerous hostile acts have provoked a response in the north, which has been forced to take measures to strengthen its national defence capabilities. Washington has been demonstrating its nuclear capabilities dangerously close to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's borders. It has been repeatedly pointed out that that brings the situation perilously close to the brink of open armed conflict, with unpredictable consequences. The initiators of today's meeting should not be surprised if Council members quite rightly propose discussing that very topic.

The fact is that the path to normalization lies in the United States and its allies ceasing their provocations, along with a thorough review of the sanctions regime and confidence-building measures. From that point of view, today's meeting is a clear step in the opposite

direction. We have frequently noted that a one-sided, intrusive discussion of the human rights situation undermines the possibility of mutually respectful cooperation, and there are plenty of examples of that. Instead of playing along with the Western narrative, the relevant United Nations mechanisms should pay serious attention to the role that the overwhelming sanctions burden is playing in violating the fundamental rights of North Korean citizens. We reaffirm our position that the indefinite sanctions regime imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be reviewed. There are no mechanisms for adjusting the restrictions where the country is concerned and no procedures for fair decisions on delisting individuals. All other restrictions on individual countries have realistic end goals, are regularly reviewed and are covered by initiatives for preventing unfair punishment, such as the mandate of the Ombudsperson, whereas the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is essentially the only exception that is denied everything.

It is notable that those who advocated for holding today's meeting are also directly adding to that inhumane policy with their illegal unilateral restrictive measures. Today Ms. Salmón described to us the suffering endured by the North Korean population, particularly children. Does she know where that suffering comes from? It is a result of those who initiated today's briefing closing off every channel for delivering goods, including medical supplies and essential basic equipment for treating citizens and those same children. Those actions are exacerbating the suffering of the population, resulting in poverty and inequality and depriving people of access to normal health care, medicine, education and technologies. It is those Council members who are violating the basic rights of the citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — and let us point out that all of that is being done for the sake of the geopolitical aims of wealthy and prosperous countries. None of the humanitarian exemptions that we have heard about so often, none of the crumbs of humanitarian assistance that Western do-gooders deign to brush off their lordly shoulders, can in any way reverse the consequences of their policies aimed at suffocating North Koreans. Their hypocritical measures are designed only to conceal their unchanging goal of dismantling the political system of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which has been firmly rebuffing Washington's geopolitical appetites for decades. In reality, none of Pyongyang's adversaries are concerned about the rights of North Koreans in any way. That once again demonstrates

the futility of today's discussion, whose sole purpose is to cater to Western double standards, both with regard to the work of the Security Council and in the area of human rights. If our Western colleagues were genuinely interested in resolving human rights-related issues, they would have turned to the universal periodic review procedure, which enables the relevant issues to be dealt with in a professional manner.

Today there have been mentions of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which is defunct, thanks to all of its completely unprofessional activities. The so-called inspection report (S/2024/215) of former sanctions experts from the United Kingdom, South Korea and Japan — not a coincidence — was clearly made to order by non-professionals, with numerous procedural violations and logical inconsistencies, and kindly passed on to the so-called experts by the Kyiv regime.

We urge our Western colleagues to refrain from promoting propagandistic narratives, acknowledge that the steps that they have been taking are counterproductive and move towards a concrete and constructive discussion of the entire range of issues plaguing the Korean Peninsula. Against that backdrop, the Council should be aware that it is extremely dangerous to delay the launch of a relevant discussion.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Prior to today's procedural vote, China had made clear its position objecting to the Council's consideration of the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We regret the result of the vote and the convening of the meeting.

Given the complex and delicate dynamics on the Korean Peninsula, the antagonism and confrontations between the parties have become more acute and have created widespread international concern. Right now, it should be a priority for all parties to stay calm, exercise restraint and act and speak thoughtfully, refraining from provoking one another and saying or doing things that could escalate tensions. It will take concerted efforts to maintain peace and stability on the Peninsula. Given the situation, the Council should play a constructive role in easing tension, helping the parties enhance mutual trust and promoting dialogue among them. Pushing the Council to consider the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a way to politicize and instrumentalize the human rights issue can only fuel the tensions and aggravate animosity and will do nothing to maintain peace and stability.

If the United States and various other countries genuinely care about peace and stability in the region, the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the welfare of the people of the country, they should take concrete action to facilitate a resumption of dialogue, abandoning their provocative behaviour and seeking to turn the situation around as quickly as possible. They should support the Council in adjusting the sanctions measures, especially the provisions that affect the humanitarian and livelihood fronts, and at the same time immediately lift the unilateral coercive measures that worsen the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As a close neighbour of the Peninsula and a responsible major Power, China stands ready to stay closely engaged with all the parties in order to play a constructive part in advancing the political settlement of the issue and achieving long-term peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula as soon as possible.

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

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Council members for supporting this important meeting. I am also deeply grateful to the High Commissioner, Mr. Türk, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur, Ms. Elizabeth Salmón, for their insightful and comprehensive briefings. And I want to express special thanks to Mr. Kim Gumhyok for his powerful speech and his courage in sharing his personal story.

Last year, when the Security Council resumed its meetings on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in more than five years (see S/PV.9398), the Republic of Korea was able to participate under rule 37. Today my heart is heavier as I lead this meeting as President of the Security Council, especially on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/HRC/25/63), which paved the way for the Security Council to address the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a stand-alone agenda item. It did so because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations amount to crimes against humanity and because those violations threaten international peace and security. Sadly, that decade-old report is still valid.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's obsessive pursuit of nuclear weapons and its Orwellian control of its own people have a single root cause — the survival of its peculiar regime, regardless of the cost. The nuclear and human rights issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are two sides of the same coin and should therefore be addressed comprehensively. As Mr. Kim indicated, that is essential in order to gain a proper understanding of the reality of North Korea and to clarify how the international community should respond. Pyongyang needs an external threat to blame for its self-perpetuating hardships and in order to build its illicit nuclear capability. While brutally oppressing its people to ensure absolute loyalty and obedience, the regime can present its nuclear weapons as a source of national pride and a symbol of the legitimacy of its leadership. Of course, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sense of insecurity comes not from any real external threat or so-called legitimate security concerns, as is repeatedly claimed, but rather from the innate flaw of the regime itself — a bizarre family cult dynasty.

North Korean leaders cannot stand comparisons with the outside world, particularly their fellow Koreans in the south across the demilitarized zone. They have always feared what could happen if the brainwashed North Korean people learned the truth about the outside world. We have recently seen the Democratic People's Republic of Korea become even more aggressive in its nuclear policy, and at the same time, as High Commissioner Türk highlighted, its war against outside information and culture is becoming ever more extreme. The complete lack of freedom of expression, and the severe punishments imposed for merely watching South Korean dramas or listening to K-pop, are already well known. Now, even speaking Korean with a Seoul accent or using Seoul-style vocabulary has become a counter-revolutionary crime. In a nutshell, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's regime wants to keep the people in the dark and try to repel the light from outside with its draconian control and nuclear weapons. However, the dark cannot destroy the light. It only defines it.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's misguided policies and measures have only aggravated the regime's position. Its illegal nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes have brought international condemnation and sanctions, as well as a resolute response from the Republic of Korea and the United States. Its harsh repression is also making its own people suffer more and is accumulating grave

charges against it in the context of accountability. The harder they try, the worse the outcomes.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's per capita annual income barely exceeds \$1,500, making it one of the world's most underdeveloped countries, and nearly half of its population is undernourished. However, the regime has continued to squander its material and human resources by indulging in expensive nuclear-weapon development, training cyberhackers and purchasing luxuries for the ruling elite, without any care for the livelihoods of its own people, all the while covering their eyes and ears. The total cost of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's recent missile development and tests over the past year was more than that of a year's worth of food for its entire population. The regime also exploits forced labour to sustain itself and generate revenue for its illicit nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes. Mass mobilization, including of children, is a key component of the economy, and the worst forms of forced labour and human rights violations are found in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's political prisons and detention facilities. Moreover, its exploitation of labour does not end at its borders. It continues to deploy workers overseas, in clear violation of Security Council resolutions, to generate revenue for its illegal weapons of mass destruction. In particular, the recent testimonies of information technology worker who have defected remind us of the evils of modern-day slavery.

And the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regime's horrendous crimes are not limited to its own citizens. The issue of abductees, detainees and prisoners of war, including Republic of Korea and Japanese citizens, has long gone unresolved. Moreover, brave North Korean escapees, when they are forcibly repatriated to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, are exposed to serious human rights violations, including torture. They must be allowed to safely reach the destinations they want. In that regard, we would like to remind all Member States that the principle of non-refoulement should be observed.

Considering those systematic human rights violations led by the regime, it is not surprising that the report of the commission of inquiry identified the main perpetrators as State officials acting under the effective control of the central State organs and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Supreme Leader. Besides that, Special Rapporteur Salmón's recent report (A/HRC/55/63) elaborates on the initiatives to advance

accountability, including a referral of the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea situation by the Security Council to the International Criminal Court, as recommended by the commission of inquiry's report. As the Special Rapporteur highlighted, despite the differences among Council members, it is critical for the Security Council to keep that option open.

As some Council members noted this morning, human rights issues should be addressed by the relevant United Nations organs. In that sense, the Human Rights Council in Geneva rightly played its role in April through its adoption by consensus of its resolution 55/21, mandating the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide a comprehensive update report on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the light of the tenth anniversary of the report of the commission of inquiry. Now it is the Security Council's turn to respond in kind.

North Korea is like a two-headed chariot, driven by nuclear weapons and human rights violations. If the human rights violations stop, the development of nuclear weapons will also stop. That is why we need to look at the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from a perspective of international peace and security, while the human rights of the North Korean people are extremely important in themselves. The Security Council should therefore address the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a regular basis. And the international community must stand united in order to continue to pressure Pyongyang to change its behaviour and policies and accept our standing call for dialogue.

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.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor. I just need to respond briefly to remarks made by the representatives of the Russian Federation and China.

First, where the Russian Federation's reference to United States military exercises is concerned, they are long-standing exercises that we have conducted with our allies that are defensive in nature and pose no threat to the regime in Pyongyang. I would also like to say that I am very glad to hear that the Russian representative would welcome further discussion in the Council of other aspects of the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea. We would very much welcome that and look forward to those kinds of discussions. However, I do think one other permanent member of the Council might take a different approach to having further discussions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

With regard to China, we have said many times that we are open to an unconditional dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We have said that over and over again. Each time we raise it, every time we reach out, our open hand is met with a clenched fist. Again, we would welcome that kind of dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My last point is about sanctions relief. We do not believe that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be rewarded for violating multiple Security Council resolutions many, many times. The message that would send to would-be proliferators is dangerous and alarming. We should therefore not reward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for its repeated violations.

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 compelled to respond to the statement made by the United States representative. It is true that we have heard United States representatives say many times that they are ready to have an unconditional dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They emphasize that they are ready to maintain the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and push for an overall solution to the Peninsula issue. We have heard that rhetoric many times. But what is the United States actually doing? Politically, it is consistently putting pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including by using the human rights issue to exert pressure on the country today. Militarily, it has conducted constant large-scale and high-intensity military exercises, including sending strategic weapons to the Peninsula. Economically, it has consistently imposed very cruel and brutal unilateral sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that have aggravated the country's humanitarian situation. We hope that the United States will stop saying one thing and doing another. We hope it will take concrete actions that reflect its political will, cease its provocative acts and work together with China and others to contribute to peace and stability on the Peninsula.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.