

Speech: “We condemn, in the strongest terms, North Korea’s actions and its continued pursuit of its illegal ballistic missile and nuclear programme”

Thank you Mr President.

We have met too many times this year to discuss the DPRK’s flagrant violations of unanimous Security Council decisions. And I am deeply disappointed that we have to meet again today, after yet another such violation. For the third time, the DPRK regime have tested an intercontinental ballistic missile. Based on an initial assessment, this missile flew higher, and for longer, than any of the previous DPRK missile tests.

So we condemn, in the strongest terms, North Korea’s actions and its continued pursuit of its illegal ballistic missile and nuclear programme. Today we summoned the DPRK Ambassador in London to convey our deep concern at this reckless behaviour.

The latest missile launch is not a one-off. It follows 19 previous launches this year, and North Korea’s sixth nuclear test in September. The latest violation demonstrates, once more, North Korea’s disregard for our collective security and the international obligations, that all of us, as law-abiding states, take upon ourselves. We have condemned the DPRK many times before. The Security Council, along with the wider international community, must now redouble our efforts to persuade the DPRK to change course.

This year, through this Council, we have worked together to implement measures to curtail the regime’s illegal ballistic missile and nuclear programmes. In developing these measures, we have ensured that the humanitarian needs of the population are protected. It is not the people of North Korea that are threatening global security. It is the regime. Our actions are in stark contrast to the brutality of that regime towards its long-suffering people, who are held hostage to the whims of its reckless leadership.

When these measures are fully implemented, we know that they have an effect. And we know too that we must exhaust every avenue to resolve the issue peacefully and diplomatically. We all hope to avoid the need to use military force. This would not only be devastating for the citizens of North Korea but also for global stability, and for all of us. Therefore we must all pursue the existing measures and all other diplomatic avenues available to us, fully and without delay.

The existing measures are only effective if robustly implemented in full by all members of the UN, starting with all of us in this Security Council. Many States do carry out these responsibilities diligently, but it is clear that more must, and can, be done.

The reporting deadline for our Resolution 2371 was on 3 November. But by 21 November only 29 Member States had submitted reports on their implementation of the measures in that Resolution. Considering the size of the threat, this is simply not good enough. The reporting deadline for Resolution 2375 is on 12 December. We call on all UN Member States to meet this deadline and provide an update on the implementation of those measures. We will continue to work with partners around the world to further improve enforcement of the existing measures.

We welcome the valuable work of the Panel of Experts, part of our shared efforts to stop the DPRK's illegal programmes. It provides us with information that we need to implement all relevant measures, and we urge all States to cooperate fully with the Panel and to take swift and robust action in response to panel's recommendations. If they do not, then they are helping the DPRK regime to threaten the world.

I focussed so far on our shared efforts to persuade the DPRK regime to change course. But in closing, I must emphasise that it is the DPRK regime alone that bears responsibility for these programmes and therefore for its international isolation. It has chosen this path. It can change course. A better future is possible for the country and its benighted people.

It must now take the responsible decision to step back towards the negotiating table and to comply with the obligations set by our community of nations.

Thank you.