

These actions are an unacceptable threat to international peace and security

Thank you President, and thank you to ASG Khiari for your briefing.

President, this week's salvo of missile launches by the DPRK, including an intercontinental ballistic missile, is further serious escalation. I join the Secretary-General in condemning these launches unequivocally.

I propose the Council respond by taking three steps:

First, we should condemn these actions clearly for what they are – an unacceptable threat to international peace and security – and reinforce the importance of implementing the Council's sanctions in full.

Secondly, we should recall that the cost of these illicit launches is being borne directly by the North Korean people. The millions of dollars expended on this week's launches alone could feed DPRK's entire population for weeks. We echo calls on DPRK to allow aid to flow freely into the country and we note that sanctions exemptions remain in place to support expedited humanitarian assistance to the North Korean people.

Thirdly, we should renew our call for North Korea to engage meaningfully with offers from the United States and the Republic of Korea for dialogue. Diplomacy is the only route to sustained peace on the peninsula.

President, we may hear one or two members of this Council seek to equate lawful defensive military exercises with DPRK's escalatory actions this week.

Defensive exercises are safe when they are notified to other states in advance, and when they operate within defined areas, as South Korean and US exercises have done.

What is not safe, is the launch of missiles that all members of this Council have agreed many times that DPRK must not possess.

It is not safe when those missiles threaten to overfly other states, causing alerts and alarm in those countries.

And it is not safe when missiles land only 60 kilometres from the Republic of Korea's coastline.

We urge DPRK to end these provocations.

Thank you.