

Speech: Supporting Denuclearization

Thank you very much indeed Madam President and I'd like to echo the Kuwaiti representative and the Equatorial Guinea representative in sending our condolences to all those around the world who have been affected by the recent hurricanes and flooding. And I think the Kuwaiti representative was quite right to point out the link with climate change and this is one reason why this Council needs to stay abreast of the developments on climate change, so thank you to him for raising that.

I've listened very carefully Madam President to what colleagues have said this morning. The unity of the Council has been really critical on this issue and all the more so because on other issues including those relating to WMD, Council action has been blocked and it's been blocked because of one Council member. We have a very significant opportunity Madam President to improve the strategic situation on the Korean Peninsula. I think the Swedish representative referred to this as a momentous moment and I think that's exactly the right word to use. What is happening on the Korean peninsula has the potential to affect the countries of the two colleagues sitting at the table. But if we can get it right, if we can make a success of non-proliferation in DPRK then we improve safety and security, not just for the region, but actually for the whole world.

You said Madam President that the Council had passed historic sanctions showing historic unity. We have a real chance for success here and I find it very hard to comprehend why anyone, why one Council member would put that opportunity at risk given what is at stake.

The Chinese ambassador referred to the 1950s and the Cold War. We don't debate how DPRK came about to have nuclear weapons, but we all agree that it is vital that she completes denuclearization, and I'll come back to that point in a minute. But it's a very serious issue Madam President. It has, if you like, been hanging over the region and the world since the 1950s and the Council has been united recently in trying to tackle it and we would appeal to all Council members not to put that unity at risk but to continue efforts.

I wanted to thank the Undersecretary-General for her briefing. I think there have been as she said some important political developments and we welcome the upcoming trip of President Moon and we hope this will further encourage DPRK to take decisive steps towards denuclearization. I did just want to say in that context though there is no equivalence between WMD and possession and threats to use and the sorts of bilateral co-operative military exercises that we have seen between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

And I think as other speakers did Madam President I want to echo the fact that next week our leaders will be here for High-Level Week. These important questions will be discussed. People will be looking at the Council even more than usual to see our leaders take their responsibilities and deliver unity and progress so this critical issue of WMD and nuclear proliferation can be properly addressed.

Turning to sanctions Madam President, all evidence related to sanctions implementation is reviewed with care and States that neighbour DPRK have a particular responsibility. And our unanimously agreed sanctions measures clearly draw a distinction between legitimate economic activity and sanctionable offences. And I'd just like to say that I very much welcome the assurances that the Chinese Ambassador set out today.

And we particularly need, for the reasons you set out Madam President in your national capacity, we particularly need monitoring of DPRK coal exports and oil exports. DPRK has shown itself able to seek creative ways to bypass checks and violate sanctions. We support the US assessment that the UNSC mandated cap on imports of refined petroleum has likely been breached. We need to be vigilant about this and this includes ship-to-ship transfers of refined petroleum to DPRK vessels at sea. The cap demonstrates international commitment to upholding the rules-based international order and we call on all States but – particularly given their special nuclear responsibilities – particularly P5 Members to ensure that agreed sanctions are adhered to.

You mentioned the Panel of Experts Madam President and a number of colleagues have also referred to that. We think it is important that the Panel of Experts report should be submitted in its original form. The Panel have produced an extensive and well-researched report, showing the extent of DPRK's sanctions evasion, and the Security Council has unanimously agreed a comprehensive set of resolutions on DPRK, and publication of these reports is one of the commitments we have all signed up to. So we look to all colleagues on the Council to enforce these commitments strictly and the independent Panel reporting is a very essential tool. I just want to stress that it is an essential tool for carrying out sanctions implementation to the full and ensuring that evasions are clamped down on.

On the UN command, I take the points about history. As a number of colleagues have said, this is a legacy from the 1950s and it is highly unusual. All requests for shipments of material in the Demilitarized Zone must be scrutinised and they must be checked for compliance with sanctions. It is important that this diligence continues.

There has been really important outreach Madam President both by your government and by the government of the Republic of Korea, but sadly Pyongyang has not yet taken decisive steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. The Council debate next week will be a very important window of opportunity that shouldn't be wasted. The United Kingdom is fully committed to supporting and assisting denuclearization in any way that we can and I hope that next week we can see very strong and firm Council unity in support of that goal and in support of full sanctions implementation.

Thank you very much Madam President.