The Republic of Korea is strongly committed to the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. It is also our unwavering belief that a world free of nuclear weapons must start from the Korean Peninsula. A world without nuclear weapons is only a daydream without the denuclearization of the DPRK. Yet the deplorable state of play is that the DPRK is now nearing the final stages of nuclear weaponization.

This year alone, the DPRK conducted two nuclear tests and 23 missile launches, the last one just this weekend, defying the warnings of the international community. The magnitude and frequency of the most recent nuclear test was a major departure from previous ones. As such, the DPRK is fast advancing its nuclear and missile programs, and even openly threatening preemptive nuclear strikes.

There is another important aspect to this. In its blind pursuit of nuclear weapons, the DPRK leadership continues to divert scare resource away from where it is most needed: to alleviate the human rights and subsistence of its own people who to add insult to injury are further suffering from the worst flood in decades.

We must act swiftly and resolutely against this unprecedented threat not only to international peace and security, but also to the international non-proliferation regime. Just over the past two weeks both during the High Level Segment and at this First Committee meeting, we heard the North Korean delegation utter, and I quote, “going nuclear is the policy of our state,” end of quote. The DPRK must realize that it will never be recognized as a nuclear weapon State, and that it must abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and immediately cease all related activities pursuant to relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Furthermore, by adopting a new, robust Security Council resolution against the DPRK’s fifth nuclear test, the international community must make clear to the
DPRK that by continuing its pursuit of nuclear and missile programs, it will only face tougher sanctions and further diplomatic isolation that will eventually lead to its self-destruction.

Further on nuclear non-proliferation, we would like to reiterate our firm support for the role of the IAEA Safeguards and its Additional Protocol, which is essential for the international nuclear nonproliferation regime. Meanwhile, the ROK is ready to work together with the international community to strengthen the international nonproliferation regime as chair of both the NSG and the MTCR between 2016 and 2017. We will also guard against the possible proliferation of nuclear materials to non-state actors as President of the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security this coming December.

Mr. Chairman,

On disarmament, the Republic of Korea believes that it is important to make progress on the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. As a country which has had thousands of its own people suffer the consequences of atomic bombings, we share with the international community concerns on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

Having said that, we should not let frustration push us towards a conclusion that is neither viable nor sustainable. We believe the best way to reach a world without nuclear weapons is through practical, concrete measures under existing legal and non-legal frameworks. We would like to make the following suggestions in this regard.

First, we must continue to uphold the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and a foundation for our efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. We encourage all member states to narrow their differences in future discussions starting from the NPT PrepCom in 2017.

Second, we underscore the imperative need for the early entry into force of the CTBT and calls for the early signing and ratification of the Treaty by the remaining eight Annex II countries to bring this twenty-year-old dormant treaty into force. In this regard, the ROK welcomes the Joint Declaration of the CTBT Friends Ministerial Meeting on September 21 and calls the attention of the
DPRK to the overwhelming strong condemnations against its five nuclear tests voiced at this Meeting.

Third, we support the early commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We already waited two decades and we cannot justify any further delay.

Fourth and finally, we place high value on the ongoing international initiative to foster enhanced transparency and confidence in nuclear disarmament such as the IPNDV (International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification).

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize once again that it is now more imperative than ever that we exert efforts and mobilize all available means to denuclearize the DPRK. We have no illusion that this task will be easy. Our unity in action is the sole answer to enhancing our collective security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. /End/