Mr. Chairperson,

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its unwavering commitment to achieve the shared vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Taking into account the devastating power of nuclear weapons, we must make every effort to advance nuclear disarmament, including through dialogues and confidence building measures. In this regard, we welcome all relevant works and progresses made in various multilateral mechanisms this year.

Among the competing approaches to nuclear disarmament, my delegation is of the view that a progressive approach is the one that reflects the political reality. In this regard, the Republic of Korea emphasizes the significance of the NPT as a cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and an essential foundation in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

I would like to note that given how the three pillars of the NPT mutually reinforce one another, we must enhance the credibility and integrity of the regime by implementing the Treaty in its entirety, including through the fulfillment of the 13 practical steps of the 2000 Review Conference Final Document as well as the 2010 Action Plan.
I would like to highlight the efforts regarding a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and nuclear disarmament verification.

My government supports an early commencement of negotiation on a FMCT and in this regard has actively participated in the works of the High-level FMCT Preparatory Group. We welcome the adoption of the Group's report and its submission to the UN General Assembly. The Subsidiary Body 2 of the Conference on Disarmament also made meaningful efforts through a substantive discussion on this important issue. My sincere hope that these efforts will translate into more concrete outcomes in a not-too-distant future.

As for the CTBT, its entry into force is long overdue, and my government urges all non-Members, in particular those in the list of Annex II, to sign and ratify the Treaty in the near future.

In the meantime, nuclear disarmament verification is a key area for enhancing transparency and building confidence. Against this backdrop, the Republic of Korea hosted the working-level meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) in Seoul in July. We also welcome the commencement of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament verification and look forward to its substantial contribution.

Mr. Chairperson,

When the Committee was held last year, there was escalating tension on the Korean Peninsula. However, since the PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games early this year, the international community has witnessed a series of positive development toward a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.
Three Inter-Korean summits as well as the first-ever historic US-DPRK summit were held in less than six months and more summits are expected to follow in the months to come. Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has been high on the agenda in these summits, and the DPRK confirmed and reaffirmed its commitment to a complete denuclearization.

Such commitment was accompanied by a series of “for the first-time” actions that were unthinkable only a year ago. The DPRK announced moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests and dismantled the Punggye-ri nuclear test site. Moreover, the DPRK committed to dismantle the Dongchang-ri missile engine test site and launch platform under the observation of experts from relevant countries. It also expressed the willingness to take additional measures including the permanent dismantlement of the nuclear facilities at Yongbyon as the US takes corresponding measures.

Hopes are high of more concrete outcomes in the coming months and I would like to quote my President’s address to the UN General Assembly last month, (I quote) “Regardless of the challenges that lie ahead, the leaders of the South, the North and the United States will move step by step toward peace based on mutual trust.” (Unquote)

The denuclearization and the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula will have far-reaching impact on the global nuclear disarmament efforts. The Republic of Korea will continue to closely cooperate with the international community as we navigate this uncharted course and I would like to ask for your full support. Thank you. /End/