Mr. Chairman,

Amidst the most urgent and grave threat to date concerning nuclear weapons, the Republic of Korea remains unwaveringly committed to our common goal of a world without these weapons.

Half a century ago, the creation of the NPT was the outcome of collective efforts by the international community, which acted on a keen sense of urgency to avert devastation by nuclear war. After five decades, the NPT is the most realistic, effective and inclusive tool to make our world free from nuclear weapons.

Despite the achievements, we are still struggling, I repeat, with an ever-growing threat that undermines the very global non-proliferation regime we have worked so hard to build over the years.

Mr. Chairman,

When North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test in defiance of the repeated warnings by the international community, and followed it with yet another ballistic missile launch, it was only met with stronger condemnations and more severe sanctions from the entire international
Within a matter of days from the sixth nuclear test, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted the unprecedentedly swift and strong sanctions resolution 2375. Numerous countries strongly condemned North Korea. The message conveyed by the international community has been very consistent and clear: it will not tolerate North Korea’s nuclear and missile ambitions. My government welcomes and supports these firm actions.

What we need most at this juncture is a strong, united commitment to the full implementation of relevant UNSC resolutions so that North Korea feels the real pain of sanctions and is compelled to stop provocations and, ultimately, come to the path of dialogue. All peace-loving countries are fully committed to our collective efforts toward the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of the North Korean nuclear program in a peaceful manner.

Once again, in this august forum, we urge North Korea to stop its pretext that nuclear weapons will guarantee its security and economic growth, and face squarely the fact that denuclearization is the only path to a secure and prosperous future. There is no bigger double standard and arbitrary distortion of facts and the law than what North Korea has been trying to inculcate for years. The result is clear. The international community does not give North Korea any credit whatsoever, and the regime is more isolated than ever. We call on North Korea to stop pursuing the path of self-ruining and make the right choice once and for all.

Mr. Chairman,

While this critical problem looms large on us, we should also continue to strive to make greater progress in the multilateral nuclear disarmament field. It is time to focus more on what unites us, not what divides us, given, among other things, the complicated security situation. We must be united, first of all, in reaffirming our strong commitment to strengthening the NPT regime as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as well as peaceful use of nuclear energy, including through the fulfillment of the 13 practical steps of the 2000 Review Conference and the 2010 Action
Plan.

We should act on all common elements on ways to move forward nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation: most importantly, the CTBT's entry into force; early negotiation of an FMCT; nuclear disarmament verification; resolution of the stalemate in the CD; and renewed efforts by nuclear weapon states in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.

These perennial common elements show that any disarmament agreement is not viable unless it is inclusive. They tell us that decision making by numeral majority that does not give due consideration to the security concerns of all parties involved is not a realistic and effective way to address both the questions of disarmament and international security.

I would like to conclude by saying that time is not in our favor. A renewed sense of urgency and genuine cooperation among all of us is direly needed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.