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Mr. Chairman,

North Korea’s nuclear program has posed a grave threat to the peace and security in the region and beyond and also undermined the very foundation of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Especially, throughout the past year, North Korea has continuously challenged the international community with its series of provocations.

Following the two long-range missile launches last year and in spite of the repeated warnings by the international community, North Korea conducted its third nuclear test on 12 February 2013. The test constitutes a flagrant violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and my delegation welcomes the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2094 in response to the test.

North Korea’s recent provocative statements with regard to its nuclear program are also troubling. Earlier this month, North Korea announced that it would readjust and restart all its nuclear facilities, including its uranium enrichment plant and 5MWe reactor, in order to expand its nuclear arsenal. The announcement of the restarting of the Yongbyon 5MWe reactor is of particular concern since it goes against the October 2007 Agreement of the Six-Party Talks, which North Korea voluntarily committed to. In addition, the recent statement is the first time that North Korea acknowledged that its uranium enrichment program, which it long argued to be of peaceful purposes, is part of its nuclear weapons program. Moreover, Pyongyang is repeatedly blackmailing the international community claiming that it is ready for a nuclear strike.
North Korea's brazen attempt to be acknowledged as a nuclear-weapons state is, again, a serious violation of UN Security Council resolutions that clearly states that North Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapons state in accordance with the NPT in any case. North Korea is the first case in the history of the NPT where a country acquired nuclear technology as a NPT State Party and then announced its withdrawal while continuing its clandestine development of nuclear weapons, thus, directly challenging the nonproliferation regime.

The international community has demonstrated its unity against North Korea's nuclear program. For example, in response to the North's recent nuclear test, 85 countries and international organizations, including the United Nations, the IAEA, the European Union, ASEAN, and the GCC, either condemned or expressed their concern. My delegation is of the view that the international community should step up its efforts in sending a unified and resolute message to North Korea, pressing Pyongyang to reaffirm its commitment to denuclearization and return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards. North Korea must realize that it will gain nothing from its continued nuclear development and provocations. Rather, it will only further isolate itself and deepen the suffering of its people. My delegation urges North Korea to refrain from further provocative acts, abide by its obligations under all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and comply with its commitments in the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks.

Thank you.