



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Intervention at UNGA Debate pursuant to GA resolution 76/262 following the use of the veto by a permanent member during the 9591st meeting of the Security Council on 28 March 2024 under the agenda item entitled **“Non-proliferation/Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”**

Statement by H.E. Philippe Kridelka

Permanent Representative of Belgium on behalf of the Benelux

New York, 11/04/2024

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the three Benelux countries: Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and my own country, Belgium.

We align ourselves with the statement of the European Union, and would like to add the following three points.

First, on the importance of today’s debate.

The Benelux countries were proud cosponsors of resolution A/76/262 that mandates this General Assembly to hold a debate within 10 working days when a veto is cast in the Security Council. The power of veto is not a privilege, but a responsibility. Security Council members act on behalf of all Members States in carrying out its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Second, on Russia’s veto.

When the Russian Federation cast its veto against the renewal of the mandate of the 1718 Panel of Experts for DPRK, it acted in isolation. Bar one abstention, all 13 members of the

Security Council, **from all regional groups**, support the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts.

President, the fact of the matter is that the **nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs of the DPRK pose a threat to international peace and security**. The Security Council therefore imposes sanctions measures on the DPRK. The Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 1718 oversees those sanctions measures, and this Committee is supported by a Panel of Experts. The Panel gathers, analyzes and publishes information in line with the mandate that it was given by the Security Council.

As a general trend, Member States seek more, not less transparency on the actions of the DPRK. Russia's veto runs counter to our collective efforts to strengthen international peace and security. Like many speakers before us, the Benelux countries **strongly condemn the veto of the Russian Federation**.

It is concerning that for the second time in less than a year, **Russia has stifled another Panel of Experts**.

In August, Russia terminated the work of the Panel of Experts for Mali when they vetoed the extension of the sanctions regime that targeted individuals who threatened the peace agreement in Mali.

Today, we want to **renew our principled support for the work of all the panels** and groups of experts of UN sanctions regimes, as well as the publication of their reports. We express our **gratitude to the experts from the DPRK Panel of Experts for their quality reporting**, and we extend the same gratitude to all expert panels.

Third, on Russia's motives

Mr. President, we listened carefully to the justification that Russia brought today for the veto it had cast on the 28th of March. Yet, we remain unconvinced.

Russia's motivation for silencing the Panel of Experts is crystal clear. In its reports, the Panel investigated and published information on the export of military equipment from North Korea to the Russian Federation.

President, Russia started an unprovoked aggression against its sovereign neighbor Ukraine, in flagrant violation of the UN Charter. And in breach of the 1718 UN Security Council sanctions regime, the Russian Federation is arming itself with weapons from North Korea to sustain its illegal war.

Mr. President, **we call on Russia to reverse course on both violations and to unconditionally restore the mandate of the Panel.** We call on Russia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine in line with the UN Charter and the Resolutions of the General Assembly. We also call on Russia and the DPRK to abide by the 1718 sanctions regime that was established by Security Council resolutions. All Security Council resolutions are binding, to all UN Member States.

I thank you.