

Madam President,

Excellencies,

I am honoured to present the High Commissioner's second written report on the progress made towards promoting accountability for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea .

Pursuant to resolutions 34/24 and 40/20, OHCHR has continued to gather information and analyze it in light of relevant international law, including over 400 interviews conducted by the field based structure in Seoul.

To develop strategies for accountability, my colleagues created forums for cooperation among practitioners on accountability issues. The Office also provided support and technical advice to civil society organizations, international lawyers and victims' groups.

OHCHR further consolidated its central information and evidence repository with a major technological upgrade. Over 4,000 files have now been preserved in the repository, including interviews, reports, satellite imagery, maps, court documents, petition letters, and audio-visual information. The repository is a key resource for any future truth and justice process.

Madam President,

OHCHR's analysis continues to confirm that there are reasonable grounds to believe that numerous crimes against humanity remained unaddressed and continue to be committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In this regard, OHCHR continuously sought to cooperate with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to support it to ensure accountability for human rights violations and to undertake broader law reforms. The Government has refused all such offers.

The work of OHCHR in pursuit of justice and accountability for human rights violations is an investment in the future and a necessary precondition for a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. We are concerned about the longstanding and enduring suffering of the victims - including the families of the abductees and enforcibly disappeared who in many cases have been waiting decades for news of their loved ones. Time is running out for them.

The prosecution of the alleged international crimes committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must remain a priority, including through a referral to the International Criminal Court or the establishment of an ad hoc tribunal or other comparable mechanism, alongside national courts taking up cases in accordance with international standards under principles of extraterritorial and

universal jurisdiction. At the same time, it is imperative to ensure that information continues to be collected and preserved to support future accountability strategies as well as complementary, non-judicial measures that assist the victims in their quest for justice, truth and reparation.

The High Commissioner recommends that the Council continues providing its support to the work of OHCHR on accountability, adequately resourced to successfully implement this mandate. We also call upon Member States and all other stakeholders to continue cooperating with OHCHR to further collect and preserve relevant information.

We hope that this Council will make clear that these crimes should not go unpunished, and that the human rights of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have not been forgotten.

Thank you.