Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me first extend my sincere congratulations to you on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I assure you and the new members of the Bureau of my delegation’s full support.

Mr. Chair,

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have learned a hard lesson that global challenges can only be addressed through multilateral cooperation. The lesson applies to the First Committee as well to tackle the pressing challenges.

Mr. Chair,

A world free of nuclear weapons is an aspiration shared by all of humanity. With this in mind, the ROK remains strongly committed to upholding and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and looks forward to upcoming 10th Review
Conference in this regard. The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the early commencement of negotiation on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) are also of essence. We also welcome all pragmatic approaches to enhance common understanding between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states such as the Stockholm Initiative and ‘Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND).’

Mr. Chair,

The conundrum of the North Korean nuclear issue continues to prove frustrating as the Korean Peninsula Peace Process has been stalled for a while. However, we should not underestimate the milestone agreements and breakthroughs such as previous inter-Korean and US-DPRK commitments.

Our efforts toward the complete denuclearization and the lasting peace of the Korean Peninsula will continue on and we sincerely hope that the DPRK will return to the negotiating table for dialogue. We would like to reaffirm our strong commitment to this goal and look forward to the global community’s continued support and encouragement. At the same time, an end-of-war declaration, as President Moon Jae-in stated at the
76th General Assembly, will mark a pivotal role of departure in creating a new order of reconciliation and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. Chair,

Repeated use of chemical and biological weapons around the world, including in Syria and elsewhere is a matter of grave concern. The ROK unequivocally condemns the use of such weapons under any circumstances.

Meanwhile, we should not lose sight of the threat of conventional arms. We note that a significant achievement by the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in fostering a well-regulated and legal trade in arms. The ROK is fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which strikes a balance between security concerns and humanitarian considerations.

Seeking collaborative responses to various emerging issues, the ROK welcomes the progress made by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE LAWS) and on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). We expect that the global
community will continue to promote responsible behaviors with regard to these issues as well as on emerging issues. In addition, the ROK is also committed to promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyber space through relevant processes to produce a coordinated outcome.

Mr. Chair,

With the firm belief in the young people as the ultimate force for change, the ROK has been championing Action 38 of Secretary-General’s Agenda for youth and disarmament. One example of our focused efforts is the ROK-UN Youth Forum on Disarmament and Non-proliferation, where the “Seoul Youth Declaration” was adopted by youth representatives from 22 countries across the globe in June. This year, the ROK is tabling the second biennial resolution on Youth and Disarmament, and I count on the wider membership’s invaluable support as we have witnessed the adoption of this first-of-its-kind resolution by consensus in 2019.

Mr. Chair,

The task of non-proliferation and arms control is both elusive and thankless. Elusive, as there are so many seemingly unsurmountable
challenges. Thankless, as we will be eventually appreciated by the untoward events that will have never transpired. However, we should continue on our path and refocus our efforts with a view towards achieving lasting progress.

The Republic of Korea, celebrating its 30th anniversary of membership to the UN this year, reaffirms its strong commitment towards realizing this lofty goal.

Thank you. END.