Mr Chairman,

I take the floor in my capacity as Chair of the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was held in Vienna from 30 April to 11 May 2012.

I am pleased to report to this Committee that the first NPT PrepCom session proceeded smoothly and in a business-like manner. All of the necessary procedural decisions to initiate the new NPT review cycle were taken expeditiously on the morning of 30 April, thereby allowing the PrepCom to undertake its substantive deliberations.

From my initial consultations, it was apparent that States parties were looking for a constructive discussion on the important work of implementation of the NPT, notably through the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan. Indeed, from my perspective, the most important outcome of the first PrepCom session was that States parties focused on the Action Plan. In this way, they showed their continuing commitment to the Action Plan and effectively consolidated it as the basis for moving forward on the NPT's implementation. Given the breadth, detail and ambition of the Action Plan, this was not guaranteed. So this was an important outcome and of course the credit for this belongs to the States parties themselves.

The factual summary which I prepared and submitted to the PrepCom as a working paper sought to encapsulate the depth and breadth of those discussions. I hope that this summary will assist States parties in their preparations for the second PrepCom session in Geneva in April and May 2013.

Mr Chairman,

In my opening and closing remarks at the PrepCom meeting, I challenged the States parties with the question “are we collectively moving in the right direction?” At the time, I did not ask for an answer – there was no expectation at the meeting that States parties would be making collective judgments at that early stage in the review cycle about whether we were on track in implementation of the 2010 Action Plan.

But at this time, I would answer that question in the affirmative – we are moving in the right direction – but with some pronounced qualifications, given the extent of the implementation challenges that confront the NPT membership as we move closer to 2015.
It was clear from the deliberations at the meeting but not surprising that the state of Action Plan implementation remains uneven. Even taking into account the difficulty of measuring implementation of many actions, implementation of pillar III (peaceful uses) is clearly ahead of pillar II (non-proliferation) and then pillar I (disarmament). The implementation of the 2010 decision on a conference in 2012 on the Middle East is on a path, with the continuing consultations of the Facilitator and the Co-convenors. But of course that remains an important work in progress.

The nuclear-weapon States delivered a very detailed statement to the PrepCom, but they need to show even more leadership and especially to report more. There is a high level of expectation on the nuclear-weapon States in this review cycle, notably the reporting by nuclear-weapon States on their Action 5 disarmament commitments at the third PrepCom session in 2014. There is a genuine interest in and hunger for information about what they are doing to meet their commitments. It may be a challenge, but the nuclear-weapon States need to feed that interest for information. Active transparency is in their interest.

At the same time, active transparency is in the interest of the NPT non-nuclear-weapon States. Coming from a country which submitted a detailed national Action Plan implementation report to the PrepCom, I would encourage non-nuclear-weapon States to report as comprehensively as their capacities allow. This builds pressure on others to be more transparent.

We will only maintain our momentum if the NPT membership continues to view the Action Plan as something we own collectively. All States parties come to Action Plan implementation with different weights of responsibility across the NPT’s pillars and different capacities. But we all own it; this collective ownership was apparent at the first PrepCom session and needs to be maintained.

We also need to focus on the future with genuinely creative ideas. We saw some in Vienna; we will need more as the review cycle proceeds and as we get a better sense of the state of implementation.

Mr Chairman

So let me conclude by saying that States parties came to the PrepCom with a strong sense of realism, a strong sense of where we were in the new review cycle and a recognition that the 2010 RevCon outcome was a genuine achievement worth consolidating. Vienna provided us with an opportunity to take stock of what we had achieved over the previous two years and to understand better the extent of the implementation challenges that confront us as we move into the second half of the review cycle. The fact that the 2012 PrepCom provided us with a solid base upon which to move forward does not foreshadow a successful Review Conference in 2015. That will be determined by our effort and our political will.

I look forward to the second PrepCom session in Geneva in six months and to assisting the Chair from the Eastern European Group maintain the necessary momentum.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.