Mr Chair,

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are issues of global concern. We all share a common interest in building a more secure world without nuclear weapons. We all share a common interest in preventing new states from acquiring these weapons of mass destruction, and not least in ensuring that weapons of this kind and sensitive materials do not fall into the wrong hands. We would all like to see the atom used solely for peaceful purposes.

Since last year, the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has been firmly on our agenda. This is fully in line with the outcome of the NPT 2010 Review Conference. The participant countries have clearly expressed their “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons”.

In March this year, Norway hosted an international conference in Oslo on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. A total of 128 states attended the conference, together with relevant UN humanitarian organisations, the ICRC, and representatives of civil society. The objective of the conference was to present a facts-based understanding of the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapon detonations and to facilitate an informed discussion on this issue with stakeholders from states, the UN, other international organisations and civil society.

The main conclusion from the conference was that no state or international body would be able to address the humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation in any adequate or meaningful way. The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, irrespective of its cause, will cross borders and affect people regionally as well as globally. The conference established, in concrete terms, what “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” means and implies.

It is therefore vital that all UN member states, both nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states, take part in the follow-on discussions. We encourage all countries to participate constructively. We warmly welcome Mexico’s offer to host a follow-up conference next

(Check against delivery)
February. This will address the long-term consequences of a nuclear detonation, and the level of preparedness needed to respond to such a catastrophe.

Mr Chair,

Norway attaches great importance to ensuring the full implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the last NPT Review Conference, which covers the three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses.

It has rightly been stated that since the end of the Cold War there has been a dramatic reduction in nuclear arsenals. At the same time, there are legitimate grounds for asking whether it is necessary in today’s world to maintain nearly 20,000 warheads. From a Norwegian perspective, our common security would be better served by moving towards and building a world without any nuclear weapons at all.

Norway, therefore, remains a staunch supporter of bilateral disarmament measures such as the New START. We welcomed President Obama’s Berlin address in June in which he highlighted the need for further disarmament initiatives, which should include all categories of nuclear weapons. A new round of negotiations would provide important impetus in the lead-up to the NPT 2015 Review Conference.

We also greatly appreciate our forward-looking cooperation with the UK on verification of nuclear disarmament. A world without nuclear weapons would require extensive verification to ensure that reductions are truly irreversible. Furthermore, we welcome last year’s decision to set up a Group of Governmental Experts on a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). A ban against the production of fissile material for weapons purposes would send a strong message that the role of nuclear weapons in security policies must be significantly reduced. It would furthermore consolidate the non-proliferation regime. Norway recognises that the question of existing stocks must also be addressed as part of a comprehensive disarmament process.

There has, however, been a protracted impasse in multilateral efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament. We are all familiar with the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which prevents us from moving forwards as recommended by the NPT 2010 Review Conference. An entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty is, unfortunately, not on the horizon. It is a paradox that an international treaty supported by more than 150 States Parties is unable to enter into force. The UN Disarmament Commission has not been able, in this century, to agree on any specific recommendations on nuclear weapons. There is therefore considerable impatience regarding how multilateral nuclear disarmament can move forward.

While we share the overall objective of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, we continue to disagree on what we should do to reach this common goal. Despite different views on how and when a convention should and could be negotiated, there are a number of measures that could be taken to enhance our common security.

We must continue and accelerate efforts to reduce existing arsenals. In addition, steps must be taken to hinder the development of a new generation of nuclear arms. Pending the introduction of an FMCT, Norway urges all nuclear weapons states to adopt a moratorium on the production of
fissile material for weapons purposes. It is essential to reinforce the norm against nuclear testing. That is why Norway has condemned the nuclear and missile tests carried out by the DPRK.

Furthermore, the CTBT Provisional Technical Secretariat must be given the necessary political and financial support to enable it to complete the verification regime.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, we should continue our efforts to further reduce the role of this category of weapons in security policies and doctrines. Much has been done in recent years, but there is room for further progress.

We should consolidate existing – and support the creation of new – nuclear weapons free zones, in particular in the Middle East. It is therefore of great importance that the conference on a Middle East WMD-free zone is held before 2015. We also sincerely hope that the process towards a de-nuclearised Korean Peninsula can be accelerated.

Mr Chair,

There can be no doubt that a highly credible non-proliferation regime is essential if we are to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Norway maintains its call for universal adherence to IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards and the Additional Protocol. It is of great importance that the Agency is given the necessary political and financial support to enable it to carry out its mandate. We support efforts to develop proliferation resistant nuclear fuel cycles, which will facilitate the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with Article IV of the NPT. Norway has in previous years provided voluntary financial contributions towards this end.

We support the programme of action adopted at the Nuclear Security Summit to secure all sensitive nuclear materials. Norway has provided funding to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund and we have supported efforts to minimise the use of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector.

Lastly, we need to resolve all outstanding proliferation concerns. We hope that the current talks concerning the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran will yield a positive outcome. In this respect we urge Iran to resolve the outstanding issues related to its past and current nuclear programme, and thus to honour its NPT obligations to the full.

To conclude,

The humanitarian effect of nuclear weapons is a matter that concerns all UN member states. Addressing this issue is part of our NPT agenda. We need to fully implement the NPT 2010 Action Plan as a matter of urgency and thus contribute to achieving our common objective of a world without nuclear weapons.