Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) -- Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and my own country, South Africa – and to introduce the draft resolution of the NAC entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”.

As mentioned in the NAC statement during the General Debate, the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. In this context, we underscore the vital importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in order to achieve nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as it remains the only international instrument that contains the legal commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Chairperson,

This year’s NAC resolution focuses on a number of issues related to nuclear disarmament which are of paramount importance for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution reiterates the grave concern and the danger to humanity posed by nuclear weapons. It also reiterates deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and the resolve to seek a safer world for all to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. In this context, it welcomes the compelling evidence presented at the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons which detailed the catastrophic consequences that would result from a nuclear weapons detonation, including the research findings regarding the strongly disproportionate and gendered impact of exposure to ionising radiation for women and girls. The draft resolution further calls upon Member States, in their relevant deliberations, decisions and actions to give due prominence to the humanitarian imperatives which underpin nuclear disarmament and the urgency of achieving this goal.

The draft resolution reiterates that each article of the NPT is binding on all States parties, and in all circumstances and that all States parties should be held fully accountable with
respect to strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. It also calls upon all States parties to comply fully with commitments and obligations made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. It further emphasises the need for all states at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law (IHL) and acknowledges the evidence acquired at the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which has significant implications for the assessment of nuclear weapons under the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law.

The draft resolution recalls the reaffirmation of the continued validity of the practical steps agreed to in the Final document of the 2000 Review Conference of the NPT, including the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty. It also recalls the commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate concrete progress on the measures leading to nuclear disarmament and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to take all steps necessary to accelerate the fulfillment of their commitments.

The draft resolution calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to fulfill their commitment to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, regional and multilateral measures. It also urges all States possessing nuclear-weapons to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems in a verifiable and transparent manner with a view to ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high alert status.

It encourages the nuclear-weapons States and those States party to the regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to make concrete reductions in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military concepts, doctrines and policies, including collective security doctrines, pending their total elimination.

It further underlines the recognition by States parties to the NPT of the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in constraining the nuclear-weapon States in the development and qualitative improvement of their nuclear weapons and in ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to take steps in this regard.

The draft resolution encourages additional steps by all nuclear-weapon States in accordance with their previous commitments and obligations on nuclear disarmament to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material designated by each nuclear-weapon State as no longer required for military purposes. It also calls upon all States to support, within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the development of appropriate nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements, thereby ensuring that such material remains permanently outside military programmes in a verifiable manner.

It calls upon all States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to work towards the full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is inextricably linked to the indefinite extension of the Treaty. It further expresses disappointment and deep concern at the lack of a substantive outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, including on the process to establish the Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as contained in the 1995 Middle East resolution, which remains valid until fully implemented.

The draft resolution stresses the fundamental role of the NPT in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and calls upon all States parties to promote the
universality of the Treaty. In this regard, it urges India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions; and to place all of their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

It urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfill its commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including those in the September 2005 joint statement, to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, to return, at an early date, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons and to adhere to its IAEA safeguards agreement, with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner, and reaffirms its firm support to the Six-Party talks.

It also urges all States to work together to overcome obstacles within the international disarmament machinery that are inhibiting efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context, and urges the Conference on Disarmament to commence, without delay, substantive work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament, particularly, through multilateral negotiations.

It calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to implement their nuclear disarmament commitments, in a manner that enables the States parties to regularly monitor progress, including through a standard detailed reporting format, thereby enhancing confidence and trust not only among the nuclear-weapon States but also between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapons States.

The draft resolution also urges States to pursue multilateral negotiations without delay in good faith on effective measures for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world, in keeping with the spirit and purpose of General Assembly resolution 1 (1) of 24 January 1946 and Article VI of the NPT and to this end, urges Member States to explore options and support efforts to identify, elaborate and negotiate the legally-binding effective measures required for nuclear disarmament.

Mr Chairperson,

Since the NAC resolution seeks to uphold previous commitments and obligations that were agreed to by consensus, we therefore believe this resolution is drafted in a manner that all States should be able to support. We further encourage all States to show their commitment to nuclear disarmament by supporting the resolution.

I thank you.