Mr Chair,

Let me start by echoing what the other speakers have said, and welcoming you as chair for our deliberations at this year’s session of the First Committee.

We are facing critical challenges. Civilians continue to suffer as a result of armed conflict. We have witnessed the use of chemical weapons. Territorial integrity of UN member states is violated. Nuclear proliferation remains a threat. The nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea are a flagrant violation of its international obligations, and they undermine regional security.

Fortunately, there have also been positive developments.

The Nuclear Security Summits have contributed substantially to nuclear security and to keeping fissile material out of the reach of terrorists. This year, the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material entered into force.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the E3/EU+3 and Iran demonstrates that diplomacy can overcome profound differences and achieve real results. The JCPOA should serve as inspiration for our broader disarmament efforts in the time ahead.
Norway welcomes the continued implementation of the new START by the US and the Russian Federation. We urge Russia to respond positively to the US proposal to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads by an additional one-third.

Mr Chair,

Our overall objective is a world free of nuclear weapons. The Storting (Norwegian Parliament) unanimously adopted a motion in April, in which it called on the Government:

'...to actively work for a world free of nuclear arms and to promote the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to be a driving force for non-proliferation and disarmament with a view to the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, and on these grounds to take a long-term perspective in working for a legally binding framework to achieve this goal.'

The Oslo conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons launched a practical and fact-based approach. The knowledge we have gained motivates us to advance our common quest to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

A legally binding framework will be required at a certain stage. This year, this issue has been discussed in the Open-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament. However, there are still divergent views with regard to the content, format, scope and sequencing of legal measures of this kind. Full elimination can only be achieved through the active engagement of those states that possess nuclear weapons.

Credible verification helps to build confidence. This is essential for continued disarmament efforts. This week, a cross-regional group of countries, to which Norway is fully associated, will circulate a resolution on nuclear disarmament verification.

The NPT remains the core pillar of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This treaty contains a clear legal obligation on nuclear disarmament, which has been further strengthened at the NPT review conferences. We must make use of the upcoming review cycle to continue to move the nuclear disarmament agenda forward.

The CTBT has set a fundamental norm, which was further reinforced by Security Council resolution 2310 last month. However, one country continues to defy the non-test norm. This underlines the urgency of achieving the formal entry into force of the CTBT.

Non-proliferation is an integral part of our endeavour to achieve global zero. Norway considers the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol to be the current verification standard.
All supplier countries have a responsibility upholding strict conditions of supply and ensuring that transfers are solely for peaceful use in the recipient country.

The danger of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction is real. For this reason, Norway calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540.

We must combat biological and chemical terrorism. Norway expects the forthcoming review conference of the BWC to result in a realistic and forward-looking outcome document.

Mr Chair,

We remain deeply concerned about the indiscriminate effect of certain conventional weapons. It is therefore essential to uphold the fundamental norms set by the Cluster Munitions Convention and the Mine Ban Convention.

Norway is currently funding humanitarian mine action and victim assistance in 20 affected countries.

Norway, along with the US, is proud to be leading a global demining initiative for Colombia. Our goal is a Colombia free of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Unless action is taken, the legacy of the armed conflict will continue to kill and injure innocent people for decades to come.

We must continue efforts to combat any irresponsible and illegal trade in or use of small arms and light weapons, including ammunitions. The Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are key in this regard. This year Norway has contributed financially to stockpile management and destruction projects in the Sahel region.

Mr Chair,

We have noted the call from the Secretary-General to ‘refrain from the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effect’ and to engage in ongoing efforts to develop ‘a political declaration addressing the issue’.

We would like to see many more countries participating in the ongoing discussions on how to enhance protection of civilians in conflict, and thereby improve compliance with international humanitarian law. There is a clear obligation to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants in conflict.
We have witnessed in Syria, Yemen and Ukraine how the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas has contributed to a degree of civilian loss of life that is clearly disproportionate and in violation of international humanitarian law.

The destruction of critical infrastructure such as housing, schools and hospitals affects the prospects for post-conflict rehabilitation, peace-building and reconstruction long after the actual fighting is over.

In our view, it makes sense to discuss this issue with a focus on actual situations and practical experience. What we are aiming for is to influence practice and set standards for conduct by all parties to conflicts.

Mr Chair,

Cyber threats pose serious challenges to almost every nation, and constitute a potential risk to international peace and security. A just, stable and peaceful digital order can only be achieved if it is based on international law. It is universally recognised that existing international law also applies to cyberspace. Further international cooperation in this field will benefit us all.

Mr Chair,

Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are all vital to our security. In order to increase our security, our collective, national and human security concerns must all be taken into consideration, so that our efforts to address them are mutually reinforcing.

Thank you.