Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made by Australia on 11 October 2017 on behalf of 29 like-minded countries. I take this opportunity to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

On various occasions Bulgaria has reiterated its commitment to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons, and that goal remains high amongst our priorities. The growing tensions in global security and DPRK’s sixth nuclear test conducted last month, as well as the repeated ballistic tests in defiance of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions only make the case of addressing nuclear weapons even stronger. This year’s Nobel Peace Prize awarded to ICAN is an illustration in that direction. We need a united approach by the international community, an approach that engages all states, and in particular the states with nuclear weapons.

While the frustration of the slow progress in nuclear disarmament may be understandable, we are of the view that the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not help speed the process, nor will it make any contribution to achieving the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Instead, we are convinced that a progressive approach based on practical and concrete measures is the avenue that will eventually lead us to fulfilling the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. This approach includes the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in particular Article VI, as the only framework for advancement in nuclear disarmament. We should all concentrate on the current review cycle of the NPT, as well as on fulfilling the commitments of 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences in all three pillars of the Treaty.
Bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is another building block of the progressive approach. As an Annex II State, Bulgaria is amongst those that bear special responsibility for the entry into force of the treaty, and as such we call on all states, especially on all Annex II states, to sign and ratify the Treaty as a matter of priority.

The commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is another element that will bring us closer to achieving the objective of a world without nuclear weapons. I take this opportunity to commend Canada on the chairmanship of the high-level expert preparatory group and look forward to the results on its work.

Verification is also essential for an effective nuclear disarmament. In this vein, we support the decision for the establishment of the Group of Government Experts as per resolution 71/67 and are ready to contribute to its work.

Mr. Chair,

As underlined earlier, nuclear disarmament is only possible with the engagement of all states and it should be based on mutual trust. In this regard, we are convinced that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains of historic significance and no efforts should be spared so that it be preserved. We encourage all parties to the JCPOA to continue to strictly abide by its terms.

Lastly, Bulgaria is convinced that through unity, trust and engagement of all, we have the potential to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you!