Mr. Chairman,

Let me join others in congratulating you on assuming the chairmanship of the first committee and wish you, and all of us every, success during this session.

Iceland fully aligns itself with the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries but let me also highlight a few key issues from a national perspective.

We are meeting at a critical juncture when some of the key arms control and disarmament agreements, which have been the bedrock of the disarmament and non-proliferation effort since the end of the Cold War, are being put to the test by non-compliance and new security challenges.
The INF-treaty has run its course due to Russia’s non-compliance, chemical weapons are still being used and illicit small arms are readily available in all major conflict areas.

The international security situation could, indeed, be more conducive to disarmament, but our key priority must be to recommit to the UN arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and use our time to build trust and increase transparency where it is most needed. We should learn from past mistakes to avoid the wasteful arms race of the past.

This is particularly relevant in the nuclear domain where some of the key instruments that brought us peace and stability are up for review, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START).

In the coming months, our priority must be to ensure that the NPT Review Conference will be successful. The NPT treaty has been effective in reducing the global stockpile of nuclear weapons while safeguarding the benefits of nuclear technology for civilian use.

The New START treaty needs to be extended as it plays a crucial role for global security, limiting the number of strategic nuclear weapons while providing important sets of confidence-building measures that
benefit all. We encourage Russia and the United States to reach an early agreement.

We should not be discouraged from supporting other mechanisms. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is one of the most widely supported international agreements although key signatures are still lacking. Its verification system is an important source of trust and transparency. To begin negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty would be another important factor in underpinning the non-proliferation arrangements.

Our common goal should be a world without nuclear weapons. The total elimination of nuclear weapons needs to be based on a mutual, balanced, verifiable and irreversible step by step approach. Also, the use of chemical weapons should be echoes from a distant past - not regular news. We need to support the work of the OPCW in investigating attacks in order to hold perpetrators responsible.

Furthermore, conventional arms, not least small arms and light weapons, have been coined the true weapons of mass destruction, with over a half million people killed every year. We need to make full use of the Arms Trade Treaty to stop the illegal trade of such weapons that seem to be readily available in all major conflict areas. Also, the Arms Trade Treaty´s unique capacity to address gender-based violence should be urgently implemented.
Mr. Chairman,

Information technology continues to transform our everyday life and has greatly benefitted our societies. However, it is also making us more vulnerable to irresponsible behaviour of states and non-state actors – ranging from direct attacks to indirect surveillance and propaganda.

We need to firmly communicate that international laws and norms apply to state behaviour in cyberspace. The Open-Ended Working Group should focus on building awareness of existing international frameworks and norms and explore how we can best build capacity and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms in the cyber domain.

Mr. Chair,

We need to re-energise the disarmament agenda with more resources and creative thinking. We also need to take concrete steps to make sure that women have an active and equal role in this effort in line with UNSCR 1325 as we prepare for the 20th anniversary of this important resolution in 2020.

Let me end by wishing us all a productive and constructive session.

Thank you.