Mr/Madam Chair,

Norway’s commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament has been a key foreign policy priority for decades. This was re-iterated by a unanimous decision on April 2016 by the Storting (Norwegian Parliament).

In February this year, a large majority of the Storting approved the Government’s review of the consequences of ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The conclusion of the review was that Norway will not sign or ratify the Treaty. It also emphasised that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The NPT has served global security well for 50 years. We must make sure that it continues to do so. The commitments made under the NPT and at earlier Review Conferences remain as valid as ever.

A deteriorating global security environment is hampering progress. However, we firmly believe that progress is possible, and can take place by focusing on mutually reinforcing building blocks. Although the nuclear-weapon states have the main responsibility for making progress on nuclear disarmament, we, as non-nuclear-weapon states, cannot simply walk away from our responsibility.

Mr/Madam Chair,

One of the key building blocks we have for making progress on the disarmament pillar of the NPT is nuclear disarmament verification. The Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification agreed on a consensus report in April. One of the report’s conclusions

(Check against delivery)
is that verification is essential in the process of nuclear disarmament and for achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

The fact that the group reached consensus shows that it is possible to find common ground in the disarmament pillar. Norway, as chair, wishes to thank all the members of the group for their active and constructive engagement.

Taking the report as basis, Brazil, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and the UK have joined us in tabling a new resolution on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (NDV). We encourage all member states to support and co-sponsor the resolution.

Our aim in putting forward this resolution is twofold: first, to gain the approval of the General Assembly for the GGE’s report, and second, to decide on follow-on activities within the UN framework. The resolution proposes establishing a new Group of Governmental Experts to carry on the work on NDV.

Norway has worked on nuclear disarmament verification continuously since 2007. The UK-Norway Initiative proved that collaboration on NDV between nuclear armed states and non-nuclear-weapon states is possible without either partner breaching their non-proliferation obligations under the NPT. The technical cooperation is continuing. Norway continues to be actively engaged in the Quad Nuclear Disarmament Verification Partnership and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. In our view, it is crucial to integrate policy perspectives with technical expertise in order to drive progress, and we remain fully committed to this approach. Norway is also working on establishing a funding mechanism that will enable developing countries to participate in NDV activities.

We consider the work on NDV to be an area where progress can be made at next year’s NPT Review Conference and beyond, in accordance with step 13 from the 2000 final document and Action 2 from the 2010 final document.

Mr/Madam Chair,

Other building blocks are crucial for the NPT. These include:

- measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons being used;
- confidence-building measures;
- efforts to address the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons;
- universal adherence to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocol, which constitute the current verification standard under the NPT;
- the entry into force of the CTBT, and in this regard we welcome Zimbabwe’s recent ratification);
- the start-up of negotiations on, and the adoption of, a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT);
- the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology to support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- international efforts to promote nuclear security; and
- efforts to combat polarisation on nuclear disarmament.

Mr/Madam Chair,

There is no fast track to a world without nuclear weapons. We need to pursue a forward-looking and comprehensive agenda, which must include a number of mutually reinforcing building blocks.

Thank you.