Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, and would like to offer additional remarks in its national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

The specter of nuclear war is creeping back to the forefront of international security landscape. A dangerous, expensive and potentially destabilizing qualitative arms race is afoot. Nuclear-armed States have maintained or even increased the relevance of nuclear weapons in their respective security doctrines, and some have resorted to open threats of use of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, some Non-Nuclear-Weapon States under the NPT have begun to openly flirt with the idea of acquiring such weapons.

As we approach the 2020 NPT Review Conference, passively acknowledging the deteriorating status quo is not an option. A renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament is in order, and it must be complemented by a comprehensive dialogue on how to attain it. But such dialogue will only be possible if it is grounded on the fundamental bargain on which the NPT rests, and on the reaffirmation of the commitments that stemmed from its review process. These include the unequivocal undertaking of Nuclear-Weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, as well as the 13 practical steps agreed in 2000, and the Action Plan adopted in 2010, which remain as relevant and applicable as they ever were.
Mr. Chairman,

Brazil has been doing its part to promote such dialogue and understanding.

Brazil is a co-author of six resolutions to be considered under this cluster, all of which aim at making concrete and positive contributions to nuclear disarmament.

We have contributed technically and substantively towards the negotiation of a Fissile Materials Treaty, including by presenting in 2010 a proposal to the CD on a framework agreement approach.

Most recently, Brazil took active part in the successful negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the TPNW. Brazil was the first State to sign the Treaty and our ratification process is underway.

This landmark Treaty, which is supported by an overwhelming majority of UN Member States, is fully compatible with the NPT and further reinforces its three pillars, in particular by building upon the obligations derived from NPT Article VI and by setting the highest legally-binding multilateral requirements for nuclear non-proliferation compliance.

The support enjoyed by the TPNW is demonstrated, inter alia, by the rapid pace of signatures and ratifications. With the ratification by Dominica last week, the Treaty has now two-thirds of the States Parties needed for its entry into force.

Mr. Chairman,

We also take pride in having developed, with Argentina, an innovative and highly successful model of nuclear safeguards implementation, through the establishment of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Material (ABACC). In addition to going well beyond the assurances provided by regular comprehensive safeguards agreements, the ABACC model has proven itself as an effective platform for building and maintaining trust and fostering cooperation. In this regard, we are pleased to announce that Brazil and Argentina have decided to include a visit to ABACC headquarters in the UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament. These visits will contribute to promote awareness about the ABACC model, which can be used as an inspiration to solve nuclear tensions in other regions.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite being one of the most promising nuclear disarmament initiatives ever undertaken, the CTBT is in a legal limbo. Two decades after its adoption, eight Annex II States are still blocking the entry into force of the Treaty by failing to ratify it. And yet, through our collective efforts, the Treaty’s verification regime is already nearly fully operational. This matter
cannot remain indefinitely unresolved. The current status quo might be comfortable for some, but it is not sustainable over the long run. It might not be long before States begin to question if it is worth maintaining an expensive system to verify a norm that is not in force. If nuclear-armed States are serious about the objective of nuclear disarmament, there is no better or easier way to demonstrate it than by ratifying the CTBT.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Delegation seizes this opportunity to thank Ambassador Knut Langeland, the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, for the presentation of the report of the Group last week, and for his able leadership of the Group. In spite of the complexities of the issue, we can all agree that verification is a crucial element of any nuclear disarmament regime, regardless of the approach favored for the attainment of such a regime. Brazil firmly believes that another GGE would provide an opportunity for the continuation of these discussions, in particular as regards the proposal for the establishment of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts (GSTE) on nuclear disarmament verification presented by the Brazilian expert in the previous GGE.

Brazil believes that the time is ripe for multilateral, inclusive and open discussions on the technical and scientific aspects of nuclear disarmament verification. The proposed GSTE would provide a forum for all States, whether nuclear-armed or not, to contribute to this debate, while ensuring that proliferation-sensitive information is safeguarded.

An important precedent is the Group of Scientific Experts which worked on the verification of a nuclear-test-ban within the CD. While there are a number of differences between these two issues, the fact is that the negotiations of the CTBT were greatly benefited by the wealth of information and common understandings on the technical prerequisites for a nuclear-test-ban verification regime produced by the Group of Scientific Experts. We hope that a GSTE would have the same beneficial impact on the wider issue of nuclear disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.