Mr. Chair,

We live in tumultuous times. Perhaps nowhere are the threats graver than in the field of nuclear disarmament. Treaties are abrogated and flouted; the architecture of arms control weakened more than ever; the nuclear arms race has been renewed and technological innovations threaten to make international monitoring dauntingly difficult. This train of events flies in the face of the responsibility of Member States, and above all the nuclear powers, under the Charter “to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.”

The world has become increasingly aware of the humanitarian consequences and planetary perils of the deployment of nuclear weapons in warfare. Greater “attention must be given to the ‘unnecessary suffering’ [that would be] brought on by [the] use [of nuclear weapons...]. If such suffering is banned in the waging of conventional war, then it should all the more be banned in nuclear conflict.” The environmental consequences of nuclear weapon use, moreover, would have devastating and uncontainable repercussions. Humanity bears responsibility for directing the forces unleashed by its own ingenuity and, in particular, for the protection of Earth, our common home, from the destructive power of nuclear weapons.
Mr. Chair,

Member States should spare no effort to reverse the current downward spiral of arms control and disarmament policies and dedicate themselves to elaborating new mechanisms of arms reduction leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament, so that the human family might enjoy the fruits of peace.

When the Cuban Missile Crisis was still a fresh memory, Saint Pope John XXIII wrote, “[In] this age which boasts of its atomic power, it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice.”² It is with this conviction that the Holy See ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, more recently, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The Holy See firmly believes that these Treaties are vital pieces in the nuclear disarmament architecture and complement one another toward achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

To realize the full promise of these instruments, we must work tirelessly to restore dialogue and to fight the trust-deficits, which unfortunately characterize the current situation of disarmament, as well as in the building of our common and collective security. The NPT Tenth Review Conference in 2020, which will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, will be a very important occasion to restore dialogue and rebuild mutual trust among nuclear-weapon States and between nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-weapon-free States. The Holy See looks forward to making a contribution at the Review Conference. The upcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference must motivate us to strengthen dialogue and rebuild trust, because there is no other path available to guarantee common collective security and lasting peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chair

Cf. also Pope Francis, *Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See for the Traditional exchange of New Year’s Greetings, 8 January 2018.*