Ireland aligns with the statements made by the European Union and the New Agenda Coalition.

Chair,
Ireland’s long history of support for nuclear disarmament is based on our belief that nuclear weapons pose a fundamental danger to our collective security, and on the unacceptable humanitarian consequences that a nuclear war would cause including the disproportionate impact on the health of women and girls of ionising radiation.

Last year, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists’ doomsday clock was adjusted by another 30 seconds, signifying that the global risk of nuclear war is as close today as it was during the darkest days of the Cold War.

What brought us here? A combination of irresponsible rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons; the ongoing qualitative arms race to modernise nuclear arsenals; the deterioration of trust, and the progressive erosion of disarmament agreements means that, as Secretary-General Guterres noted in High-Level Week, “the perils posed by nuclear weapons are not merely hypothetical or in some far-off future; they are present and real.”

Reversing this negative trend will be extremely challenging, especially when complicated by fast-paced technological developments. Nevertheless, there is no more urgent task.

2020 will be an important year for our work, with the approach of the NPT Review Conference. The NPT is one of the major success stories of the international community and of multilateral diplomacy.
We are mindful of the need to make progress across all three pillars, which are mutually reinforcing. To ensure a successful outcome in 2020, as a starting point, all states must reaffirm their commitment to all consensus based outcomes that we have collectively reached throughout the past 50 years including the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear weapons states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Ireland shares many of the concerns on heightened tension in the international security environment. However, we reject the notion that progress on disarmament can only be made when the security conditions exist. Instead, the outcome of the 2020 review conference most build on previous achievements and it is incumbent on us all to play our part.

All states should take a proactive approach and retain a sense of ambition. In this regard, Ireland welcomes that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now two thirds of the way towards entry into force. Ireland’s legislation is currently making its way through parliament and we will ratify the Treaty imminently. We encourage all states who have not already done so to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Ireland is also committed to ensuring that the diversity of voice and participation including of women and civil society is reflected in the NPT review process and in nuclear disarmament and non proliferation frameworks and processes more broadly.

Chair,

Ireland is deeply concerned by continued tensions in sensitive regions which undermine mutual understanding and trust between states and threaten multilateral cooperation in the nuclear disarmament and non proliferation sphere.

Ireland is deeply concerned by recent missile launches by the Democratic Republic of Korea. We want to see North Korea fully dismantle its nuclear programme in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. A concrete step that would demonstrate the DPRK’s good faith would be the immediate signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban
Treaty as well as a return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. A binding agreement on all parties that guarantees the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula would represent a major contribution to lasting peace and security in that region and internationally. While welcoming and encouraging the continuation of dialogue, in the absence of concrete results all countries must fully implement the sanctions which have which put in place under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Ireland continues to regard the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as a major achievement of multilateral diplomacy and an important contribution to nuclear non-proliferation. It is incumbent on all to exert restraint, wise political leadership and to work collaboratively through bilateral and multilateral channels if we are to succeed. As previously stated, Ireland regrets the withdrawal by the United States from the JCPOA. We are concerned by the measures taken by Iran since the beginning of July, inconsistent with its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, as reported by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We do not accept the argument that the Agreement is a quid pro quo and that observance of its terms can be traded, varied or modified on a unilateral basis. We believe that a return to strict adherence to the terms of the JCPOA by all of its signatories will support peace in the region.

Entry into force of the CTBT is an urgent priority. All remaining Annex II States have a special and individual responsibility to lead, without waiting for other States to ratify the CTBT so that the treaty can enter into force. Moratoria on testing, while important, are not a substitute for the entry-into-force of the Treaty.

Ireland is concerned by the unravelling of key international disarmament agreements. In that regard, we are mindful that throughout its 30-year history, the Intermediate range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) had resulted in the removal and verifiable destruction of almost three thousand missiles with nuclear and conventional warheads. It has undoubtedly improved international security, for Europe in particular. Its achievements should be preserved, and we call on all parties to exercise restraint and to avoid an arms race. Recent challenges to the INF Treaty have also raised concerns for other disarmament and non-
proliferation instruments. Ireland also urges the extension of New START and the negotiation of a successor instrument. Ireland takes this opportunity to remind Nuclear Weapons States and in particular the two states with the largest nuclear arsenal of their specific responsibilities.

Ireland fully supports UN Secretary General Guterres’ Agenda for Disarmament, which aims to return multilateral disarmament and nonproliferation to its central role in building international peace and security. Ireland believes that it presents us with a rare opportunity to break the stalemate and to facilitate the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Ireland is committed to championing three of the actions including action 1 on facilitating dialogue on nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, though mindful of the challenging security environment, we remain steadfast in our shared commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.