Mr. Chairman,

These have been two weeks filled with stimulating discussions. We have heard thought-provoking contributions from panels, and we have had interactive and forward-looking discussions.

We would like to express our gratitude for your efforts and your leadership in bringing this session to a good end.

If there is one thing that binds us all, it is the clear wish to move forward and give a further impetus to nuclear disarmament. This much is clear from the statements and working papers by both delegations at the floor and the advocacy groups, research institutes, think tanks and academic institutes present here.

The involvement of civil society with this topic remains of importance as a catalyst for progress. The recent national debate about a national ban on nuclear weapons, after a civil society initiative, was an important stimulant for the dialogue on nuclear disarmament in the Netherlands.

Mr. Chairman,

We have a lot of work ahead of us. As a start, we will have to study and assess all the ideas and recommendations that have been put forward these last two weeks.

Based on this work, we must find ways to build bridges and come to a consensus outcome of this OEWG. We are hopeful that this is not an impossible task, and we are strengthened in this belief by the common message emanating from our discussions here: we must get to Global Zero.

This goal we all share, and we have made real progress in identifying the means necessary for reaching this goal. In itself, that is already a positive outcome of the OEWG; it has taken away misunderstandings and it has helped us to understand each other better.

Mr. Chairman,

Let there be no mistake: there is room for compromise here. The Netherlands is clear on what must happen: we must work on effective measures on nuclear disarmament. Those include the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which is an element of a nuclear weapon free world that we will continue to work towards. We will support your efforts to reach a consensus outcome of the OEWG, including, as my Norwegian colleague also mentioned, on the modalities and sequencing of the different measures we have discussed, in order to maximize their effectiveness.

That includes getting the nuclear weapon possessors, both NPT and non-NPT, involved in the process. In that context, the Netherlands regrets the absence of these countries here. However, if this OEWG manages to send a united message, this will not go unnoticed.

Thank you.