Mr Chairman

I fully share the views expressed by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition. Nuclear disarmament remains a priority issue for my country, and one on which progress must be urgently made to improve the security of the international community as a whole, and to facilitate the NPT's full and effective implementation.

New Zealand is also pleased to associate itself with the statement delivered by Japan on the subject of disarmament and non-proliferation education. New Zealand was honoured to be represented in the United Nations Secretary General's Expert Group on this issue during the previous review cycle, and continues to look for practical ways in which education initiatives can complement and inform our work.

A key element of disarmament and non-proliferation education is the full and effective participation of civil society in NPT processes. Indeed, the detailed NGO presentations that took place in this room last week contributed considerable food for thought on the particular issue of nuclear disarmament. It was clear from the content of those presentations that we have some way to go in the pursuit of a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies, on the road to their total elimination.

Mr Chairman

In working towards the full implementation of Article VI commitments, we need to take every opportunity to advance collective efforts. This year, we have engaged in substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. A key theme in those discussions was the need for greater transparency and confidence building, with respect to both the current status of nuclear arsenals and on disarmament efforts towards their destruction. The need for this process to take place not only between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, but also, perhaps most importantly, between the nuclear weapon states themselves, is clear.

In our Conference on Disarmament discussions, we looked at ways to take forward transparency and confidence-building measures in a concrete way. It may be useful to include this element as a focus of our deliberations here. We would see regular reporting by all NPT States Parties on their implementation of the Treaty as a useful tool to advance the objectives of the strengthened review process agreed in 1995. New Zealand will submit a report on its
implementation of the Treaty to this PrepCom, and we would encourage other States Parties to do the same.

Further progress on scientific engineering advances in support of nuclear disarmament efforts could also constitute a tangible achievement in our preparation for 2010. The United Kingdom did some very useful technical work on possible verification modalities for nuclear disarmament during the last review cycle. We would welcome an update as to the progress of this work since 2005, and whether there are any plans to integrate this work into the current review cycle.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty represents an important tool in the fight against nuclear weapons, and remains another area where progress can be made in the short term, even with acknowledgement of the considerable political challenges the Treaty continues to face with respect to its entry into force. New Zealand calls on States not yet party to the CTBT, in particular Annex 2 States, to ratify the Treaty as a matter of priority. The complete installation of the CTBT verification regime, particularly the International Monitoring System (IMS), would make a fundamental contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr Chairman

These are just some initial thoughts. We look forward to participating in interactive discussion on a wider range of nuclear disarmament issues under your guidance.