STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR G.T. MUTANDIRO TO THE FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2015 NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY REVIEW CONFERENCE

Mr President
Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the delegation of Zimbabwe, allow me Mr President to commend you for the able and professional manner in which you have conducted our deliberations. My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr President, Zimbabwe reaffirms its belief that the NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, that it is the basis for us to pursue nuclear disarmament and guarantee the inalienable rights of State parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. All State Parties must commit themselves to a balanced implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty in a non-discriminatory manner. From the views expressed by many delegations, it cannot be disputed that there is consensus that the absence of balance in the implementation of the Treaty is cause for great concern. Greater emphasis continues to be placed on non-proliferation whilst peaceful uses of the atom and most critically, disarmament, are given lesser prioritisation. The three pillars of the Treaty are mutually reinforcing towards the achievement of its objectives.

The 2010 Review Conference Action Plan reaffirmed the inalienable right of State Parties to develop research, production and the use of peaceful nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with articles I, II and IV of the Treaty and also acknowledged that this constituted one of its fundamental objective. This also was acknowledgement of the fundamental role that the IAEA plays towards this end. The Agency’s Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme continues to contribute significantly to the development priorities of many developing countries. Its Technical Cooperation activities that seek to promote the application of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes in areas such as human and animal health, agriculture, water resources management and environment
protection amongst others, remain relevant and critical in developing countries' endeavours towards the attainment of socio-economic growth. Benefits ensuing from these uses of nuclear applications continue to boost economic development through releasing resources to other needy sectors, thus contributing towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

Mr President,

As is the case with other developing countries, Zimbabwe has and continues to benefit immensely from the applications of nuclear science and technology in areas such as cancer therapy, nuclear medicine, crop production, animal health, energy planning and radiation safety.

Techniques such as the early application of rapid and sensitive diagnostic methods in the control of trans-boundary animal diseases have drastically reduced the prevalence of some animal diseases including foot-and-mouth in the Southern African region. Developing countries have also benefited from other nuclear application techniques that include the improvement of yields in crop production, human health, the development and integrated application of pest control programmes such as the AU – PATTEC and water resources management.

Mr President,

My country is actively involved in activities of the Forum for Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA) which was given momentum by the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone on the African continent. To further complement the initiatives of the FNRBA, my Government hosted a SADC Nuclear Regulators Meeting in Harare in February 2011 to establish a network of nuclear regulators for the SADC region. The meeting came up with a cooperative agreement which was signed by SADC Member States. It is envisaged that this process will culminate in the signature of a SADC Protocol on Nuclear Radiation Safety.

Furthermore, in March 2012, Zimbabwe hosted a meeting for Piloting, Monitoring and Evaluation of TC Programmes, which finalised methodologies for the 2012/13 TC Programme and ongoing cycles.

Mr President,
It may be recalled that the 2010 Review Conference also urged that “in all activities designed to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, preferential treatment be given to the non-nuclear States parties to the Treaty, with due consideration to the needs of the developing areas of the world” It also reaffirmed that State parties undertake to facilitate and have right to the fullest possible exchange of equipment and the requisite information. It is against this background that Zimbabwe joins other Member States in calling for the provision of sufficient, assured and predictable financial resources for the TC Programme. We also endorse the recommendation that the TC fund be funded from the regular budget.

Mr President,

Zimbabwe is concerned that some States continue to hinder the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to least developed NPT State parties, imposing unjustifiable conditionalities in violation of Article IV of the Treaty and the imperative need for State parties to respect each other’s choices and sovereign decisions in this regard. Zimbabwe is unreservedly committed to upholding the global nuclear non-proliferation agenda, supports strict adherence to safeguards obligations and underscores the right of State Parties to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. We equally reject any attempts to politicise the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Programme in violation of the Statute of the IAEA. In view of the critical importance of the Agency’s promotional role as provided in article II of its statutes, it is imperative that all member states lend maximum support to initiatives in this regard and desist from action that undermines the Agency’s Statute, its efficacy and effectiveness.

Mr President,

Radiological incidents, the most recent of which is the tragic Fukushima accident have demonstrated the critical need for the IAEA to assist Member States build capacities and infrastructure to ensure the safe and secure use of nuclear energy and technologies. Zimbabwe fully supports IAEA nuclear safety and security programmes and it also believes that these are multi-dimensional and complimentary sectors. Whilst Nuclear energy can only benefit mankind when used in a safe and secure environment, my government is increasingly concerned over the growing tendency to place
greater priority on the Agency’s non-promotional activities at the expense of technical cooperation activities. We also believe that considerations of nuclear safety and security considerations should not be used as a pretext to impede member states from full access to nuclear technologies for peaceful applications as provided by the Agency’s statutes.

Mr President,

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the deliberations of this Preparatory Committee session will inject further impetus towards the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan.

I thank you.