Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement of the European Union delivered in this Cluster. I would like, however, to use this opportunity to make a few remarks from our national perspective.

With respect to its territory and population, the Czech Republic has a relatively extensive nuclear programme oriented entirely at peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Czech Republic has six operating nuclear power reactors. Four VVER-440 units at Dukovany Nuclear Power Plant and two VVER-1000 units at Temelin Nuclear Power Plant. Nuclear power accounts for almost one-third of our country's electricity production. Above that the Czech Republic also operates two research and one training reactor, two interim storages of spent nuclear fuel and several another small nuclear facilities.

The Czech Republic is taking fully into account the importance of maintaining the highest reasonably achievable standards in nuclear safety, radiation protection and emergency planning. We exercise therefore a considerable effort to make sure that the necessary infrastructure and financial, human and research resources have sufficient capacity to meet our responsibilities in this field.

We are a steadfast supporter of international co-operation on these issues. In this regard, we recognise the IAEA as the principal body for the transfer of expertise and technology in all areas relating to peaceful use of nuclear energy. Our country is involved in financing of a number of technical assistance projects prepared in co-operation with the IAEA. The Czech Republic holds every year fellowship programmes for experts from developing countries which usually entail scientific visits of more than 30 persons from Eastern and Central Europe, Asia, Africa and Southern America, dedicated to nuclear safety, safeguards, nuclear research, radiation protection, waste management and nuclear medicine. Last year we dispatched teams of our nuclear experts to several East European countries to assist there with education of local personnel. Above that, the Czech Republic contributed in 2017 more than 280,000 EUR to the Fund of Technical Cooperation Program and we also made an extra-budgetary contribution of almost 80,000 EUR through the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative for the Armenian project for Upgrading national nuclear regulatory infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic firmly supports the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to development, research, production and use of nuclear energy. We also recognize the right to procure equipment, materials and exchange scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, as stipulated in Article IV of the NPT. At the same time we understand that for the purpose of safe use of nuclear energy the recipient countries have to sign, ratify and implement international agreements and conventions creating an international legal framework for a safe management of
both nuclear facilities and nuclear material. Once all legal requirements are met and all principles of nuclear non-proliferation are followed, nothing should hamper the spirit of international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy among States Parties to the Treaty.

The Czech Republic is also pleased to inform, that it hosted in 2017 an Integrated Regulatory Review Service Follow-Up mission. The IAEA experts confirmed that the Czech Republic has significantly enhanced its regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety and implemented recommendations made by the original IRRS mission in 2013. The IRRS Follow-Up team also noted that the new Atomic Act, in force since the start of 2017, and the development of supporting regulatory decrees based on IAEA safety standards represent significant achievements in improving our regulatory architecture. Also the Czech Republic has just recently sent a formal request to the IAEA for an International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission, which we should host in 2020. Because of our very positive experience with the IAEA missions, we’d like to encourage all states to explore the benefits of these missions and consider requesting one.

Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic is proud on its participation in a Member States Support Programme to the IAEA Safeguards. Our main focus is on tasks providing training activities for the Agency inspectors and other IAEA technical personnel. Other tasks cover testing of new safeguards equipment, including new surveillance systems at Czech nuclear facilities, as well as engagement of Czech experts in various services provided to the IAEA. In total, we have currently 12 active tasks and one task on stand-by.

One of our MSSP tasks I’d like to mention focuses on developing the ability to identify and isolate single nuclear material containing particles from swipe samples through a cutting edge technique called Fission Track. The Czech Republic gladly provides its irradiation facility and subsequent analytical processing to the Safeguards Analytical Laboratory in Seibersdorf, in order to contribute to the improvement of Agency’s future capability to detect undeclared activities and materials. Through this we indirectly help the IAEA to draw safeguards conclusions in more effective and timely manner.

Finally, I’d like to close my remarks with commending Norway for organizing the 3rd International Symposium on Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Minimisation in Oslo this June. This is a noble effort dedicated to removing the most proliferation sensitive nuclear materials from civilian use and the Czech Republic is proud to participate in it.

I thank you for your attention.