Mr Chair,

Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Our views are also reflected in the working paper and statement by the Vienna Group of 10. Let me make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The NPT assures an inalienable right of all states parties to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, without discrimination. It also constitutes a framework for safeguards that are fundamental for maintaining confidence in the peaceful nature of nuclear activities and for preventing nuclear proliferation.

Thanks to the NPT, nuclear energy and other peaceful nuclear technologies are available also to non-nuclear weapon states. For Finland this has been very important indeed: We have benefited from nuclear energy for 40 years. Today, one third of our electricity is generated by nuclear power.

Nuclear technologies can bring enormous benefits to millions of people worldwide. They can play an important role in achieving sustainable development goals in a number of fields: energy, health, food and agriculture, water, to name a few. Nuclear power can help countries in assuring the security of their energy supply, as well as in reaching agreed emission targets. Finland is happy to support the IAEA Technical Cooperation programme, contributing to these important goals, through annual contributions.

Mr Chair,

It is clear that to fully benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, states need to have the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards in place, and commit fully to non-proliferation in line with NPT obligations. For Finland, these have always been guiding principles. We urge all states to show their commitment to non-proliferation, with maximal transparency, by signing and ratifying the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements. The Additional Protocol constitutes the IAEA safeguards standard.
A sound legislative framework for nuclear and radiation safety, an independent, competent and well-resourced regulatory body, as well as responsible licensees are an essential foundation for the safe use of nuclear energy. This must be complemented by effective control of nuclear material and the fuel cycle, as well as a responsible nuclear waste management strategy.

Finland has invested considerably in developing national expertise to ensure all these elements are in place. These are key principles also in our international cooperation on nuclear energy. Through our bilateral safeguards support program with the IAEA we have lent our expertise to the Agency and to the benefit of its member states - already for 30 years. We are committed to sharing our experience and know-how on nuclear safety, security and safeguards also on a bilateral basis, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration.

With more and more international cooperation in the civil nuclear field, with increasing number of actors involved, we find it important to explore good practices with a view to developing a model framework agreement for intergovernmental cooperation. For this reason we are pleased to support the working paper submitted by France.

Nuclear security remains mainly each state’s national responsibility. International cooperation can, however, assist in our common effort to prevent unauthorised use of nuclear and radioactive material. Finland takes an active part in initiatives to enhance nuclear security worldwide, notably as the international coordinator of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the GICNT. We are also a longstanding contributor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund.

To conclude, Mr Chair,

The development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy contains enormous potential, but also necessitates a high degree of responsibility from the states seeking to utilise it. Here, too, the NPT is our prime frame of reference and the essential foundation for all our work.