Mr. Chair,

Finland fully associates itself with the statement by the European Union earlier in the debate. I will make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Article VI of the NPT provides a permanent, universally recognised framework for pursuing nuclear disarmament. It brings together all States Parties in their common quest to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Reaching this goal requires verifiable and irreversible steps by the nuclear weapon states, whether parties to the NPT or not. A special responsibility is thus placed on these states. At the same time, all States Parties can and must contribute by implementing their obligations under the NPT as a whole.

Mr. Chair,

We recognise that nuclear disarmament is a gradual, step by step process. We call on all nuclear weapon states to take concrete action in nuclear disarmament during this review cycle. Let me highlight three concrete issues where we strongly believe progress is possible over the next two years.

First, increasing transparency concerning nuclear weapons. There are many ways to do this. Let me mention just one: national reporting in the NPT context. Many good proposals have been made over the years on improved and more uniform national reporting on nuclear weapons and doctrines. Why not take concrete action on these proposals? An additional practical step could be the proposal by the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, to convene a session during the third PrepCom at which nuclear weapon states would explain their national reports followed by an interactive discussion with other States Parties.
Second, concluding effective arrangements on Negative Security Assurances. There is broad agreement that non-nuclear weapon states that are in compliance with their NPT obligations have a legitimate right to receive legally binding negative security assurances from nuclear weapon states. While we recognise the value of the unilateral declarations made so far, we feel it is high time to take the next step: starting by reaffirming existing assurances, we should gradually work to harmonise and consolidate these, with the aim of eventually concluding a multilateral arrangement. Progress in this task, agreed already in 2010, would be a major contribution to building the confidence and trust needed for a successful outcome in 2020.

Third, addressing the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe. It is our understanding that these weapons are not operationally deployed on a day-to-day basis, as the actual weaponry is stored separately from the delivery vehicles. It would make sense to codify this current good practice into a verifiable arrangement. A first step could be unilateral declarations confirming the current situation, followed by verifiable bilateral and multilateral arrangements at an appropriate time.

Mr. Chair,

The very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 addressed the threat posed by nuclear weapons and the elimination of nuclear weapons from national armaments. We have a norm of non-use of nuclear weapons, a norm backed by a 73-year practice of non-use. This norm must never be broken and nuclear weapons must never be used again.