Mr Chairman,

The United Kingdom would like to align itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union. I would now like to add further remarks in our national capacity.

The NPT is the fundamental framework for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. IAEA safeguards are a key practical tool for delivering these NPT commitments, providing mutual reassurance, and advancing the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The UK has always been a strong advocate of the importance of nuclear safeguards. We believe that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement combined with an Additional Protocol represent the gold standard of nuclear safeguards under the NPT, and we encourage all states to meet this standard.

Following our decision to leave the European Union and Euratom, the UK can reassure the international community that we have the arrangements in place to set up a domestic safeguards regime, and new international agreements ready, such that when we leave Euratom, our safeguards regime will be equivalent in both coverage and effectiveness as under the current arrangements. These arrangements demonstrate the importance that we place on effective safeguards as a Nuclear Weapon State.

Mr Chair,

Nuclear safeguards arrangements must continue to modernise and evolve to meet the needs of the twenty-first century. This is why we are a strong supporter of the State Level Concept and welcomed the IAEA’s decision to develop a State Level Approach for the UK. We provide £1.3
million to the IAEA every year through the UK Safeguards Support Programme, which includes training for inspectors and environmental sampling.

Iran’s nuclear weapons programme presented the international community with one of its most difficult non-proliferation challenges this century. The agreement of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was a significant contribution to the global non-proliferation architecture. Since its implementation, we have worked with our partners in the Joint Commission to ensure the deal’s success and we will continue to do so.

We strongly urge Syria to cooperate fully with the IAEA by immediately providing access to the information, documentation, sites, material and personnel in Syria requested by the IAEA.

Mr Chair,

Non-proliferation guarantees are fundamental to the trust and confidence between states that underpins both nuclear disarmament and the sharing of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Effective verification and inspection mechanisms, such as IAEA safeguards, are required to deliver this trust. But safeguards only work if states are willing to reach the highest standards and to remain committed to their obligations. For all these reasons the UK is a strong supporter of the work of the IAEA, we reach the highest standards in our own safeguards and we urge all states to make similar commitments.

Thank you.