Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to refer to the statement by the European Union, on Cluster II to which the Austrian Delegation is aligned. In addition, Austria has worked within the Vienna Group of 10 on a number of “Vienna issues”, some of which relate to Cluster II. Let me also refer to the statements that were delivered by Australia on behalf of the Vienna Group of 10. Furthermore, the Austrian National Report, submitted last year as well as this year’s update covers all pillars of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and extending it to the remaining countries, the extended IAEA comprehensive safeguards system pursuant to the NPT is yet to become universally applied. At the same time, the strengthening of the safeguards system has at least two important effects: First, with the efficient implementation of a strengthened safeguard system, it is possible to detect undeclared activities; second, such a system in place results in increased confidence within the international community with regard to the peaceful nature of the nuclear programs in individual countries. This enhances confidence, reduces mistrust and the likelihood of conflicts about alleged nuclear weapons programs.

While the costs and efforts related to inspection regimes may seem high to some, the benefits and potential peace dividend certainly outweighs these resource-intensive efforts. This is certainly true in the context of regions where transparency, mutual trust and confidence are lacking. We have been very encouraged about the negotiation progress by the EU 3+3 and Iran and the framework agreement to comprehensively
resolve the open questions and concerns about the Iranian nuclear program. We hope that these negotiations will lead to a successful conclusion and a good result in the crucial coming weeks. If they are, this would be an important gain for the credibility of the NPT. Austria is pleased to have contributed to the talks of the EU 3+3 and Iran by providing the venue and related services during some of the negotiation rounds.

Austria has already expressed its views with regard to the DPRK nuclear weapons and missiles program during the general debate.

Mr. Chairman,

As nuclear technology evolves and spreads wider across the globe, export regimes have to be adjusted. In past years, the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group have undertaken updates of their lists. At the same time, new members have been admitted or have expressed interest in membership. These developments have an impact on the functioning of these export control regimes. As a consequence, there is a need for more in-depth and “out-of-the-box” reflection about the nature and evolution of these regimes and their relationship to the NPT.

In order to strengthen the NSG as an effective arrangement in the field of non-proliferation and export controls, Austria together with Germany and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace recently hosted and international workshop entitled “The Future of NSG Participation and Adherence”. The primary topic of the workshop was to discuss the impact of widening NSG participation, in particular to countries that are not parties to the NPT, on the non-proliferation and export control regimes.

Mr. Chairman,

Austria fully supports the goal of a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East and we note the efforts that have been undertaken in this respect in the past review cycle. We, too, regret that the conference that was supposed to launch this extremely important process could not be held as yet and we understand the disappointment of the countries in the region. Austria hopes that one of the outcomes of the Review Conference will be renewed momentum that the Conference intended to launch this important process can be convened as early as possible and that a clear outcome can be defined. We welcome the working papers and many statements that have been presented on this issue as a clear indication of the continued interest of the whole NPT membership to take this important initiative forward.
Thank you Mr. Chairman.