Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union earlier. I would like to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Bulgaria’s reaffirms the equal importance of all three pillars of NPT, they are mutually reinforcing and contribute to international peace, security and stability. We recognize the inalienable right of States Parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with Article IV of the Treaty, and in compliance with all safety, security and non-proliferation norms.

The central role of IAEA in promoting nuclear safety and security standards and in the exchange of relevant experience and cooperation among Member States is undeniable. We support the valuable work of the Agency in these fields, including through the Technical Cooperation Program.

Undoubtedly, nuclear safety and security are of utmost importance and no efforts should be spared for their continuous strengthening. Ensuring and maintaining a national regime for nuclear security, including in the area physical protection, should be a priority for all Member States.

Mr. Chair,

The responsible use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the applicable standards for nuclear safety and security can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in the areas of energy, food, water and health. In this regard, we welcome the International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power scheduled to take place in Vienna in October this year.
Bulgaria actively participates in the preparations of the International Conference on Nuclear Security which will take place in Vienna in 2020, including as a co-chair of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference.

My country has a longstanding excellent collaboration with IAEA and the Seibersdorf Laboratories in the area of technical cooperation, inter alia in the field of food safety, as well as in the screening and treatment of oncological diseases.

Bulgaria is convinced that capacity building and training are key in achieving and maintaining the highest standards of nuclear safety and security. In this regard, as of 2015 the University for National and World Economy, with the support of IAEA, is offering an international master’s program in Nuclear Security. Despite being a relatively new program, students from Africa and the Middle East have already benefited from it. Thus, in cooperation with IAEA, Bulgaria contributes to building capacity in the area of nuclear security internationally.

In addition, in 2016 the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency created a Capacity Building Center. Since its establishment experts from Armenia, Iran, Jordan, Egypt and others have participated in the program and have benefited from the exchange of experience, know-how and technologies in the area of the safe exploitation of nuclear facilities.

Bulgaria will host in June this year the 26th Annual Forum of the State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating WWER Type Reactors, the so called WWER Forum. The objective of this forum is to foster enhancement of the nuclear safety and radiation protection in the interested countries through utilization of the collective experience, information exchange and consolidation of efforts of the national nuclear safety authorities to study safety problems and improve regulatory policies and practices.

Mr. Chair,

Let me conclude by reiterating Bulgaria’s commitment to responsible use of nuclear energy in line with the highest safety, security and non-proliferation standards, and our full support for the IAEA activities in this field.

Thank you!