Madam Chairperson,

I would like to explain our vote on the draft decision entitled “Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification”. While in a spirit of cooperation, we had decided in 2004 to go along with the resolution that established the Panel of Government Experts, we were neither convinced then nor now that another Panel of Experts could make a significant contribution to the philosophy of verification. The inconclusive report of the Panel confirms that concern.

We wish to also note our disappointment with the limited representation in the Panel, excluding some important countries. To lend greater legitimacy and wider acceptance among Member States, we hope that adequate representation of all relevant countries would be ensured in any future work on this important issue.

We continue to believe that verification is essential to promoting confidence among States in compliance with disarmament treaties and agreements to which they are Parties. Verification ensures the effectiveness and integrity of such agreements. However, the concept and practice of verification is integral to arms limitation and disarmament agreements. It has no independent existence and concepts relating to verification cannot be promoted in a vacuum.

Major disarmament initiatives since the verification principles were agreed upon, have suffered setbacks. The CTBT and the BWC Protocol are examples. It is not for want of knowledge in the field of verification that these initiatives have been sidelined but on account of political reasons. Verification was a goal for FMCT and now non-verification is a new objective. Changing goal posts would erode the confidence of States in the effectiveness and integrity of multilateral treaties.

I thank you Madam Chairperson.