Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the delegations of Austria, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, New Zealand and San Marino regarding draft resolution L.6, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament.”

Having participated at senior political level at the High level Meeting on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013, our delegations joined the call of the overwhelming majority of states for more urgency, focus and new momentum for nuclear disarmament. Our delegations therefore also strongly support the disarmament objectives behind this draft resolution. In deciding to support the resolution, we would like to stress the following points of particular relevance and importance to us.

We see resolution L.6 as being entirely consistent with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Article VI of which requires the pursuit of (quote): "effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." The resolution is also consistent with the Action Plan agreed without a vote at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which covers all three pillars of the NPT and Action 1 of which obliges States Parties to pursue policies that are fully compatible with the NPT and with (quote): "the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons."

Any discussion or initiative aimed at furthering efforts towards achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons should take account of the fact that, currently, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty contains the only multilateral Treaty-based commitment to disarm. This was underscored clearly in the Thirteen Practical Steps agreed by consensus at the 2000 NPT review conference which included an “unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under Article VI." This unequivocal undertaking was reaffirmed by the nuclear weapons states at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Our delegations believe that any effort towards a world completely free of nuclear weapons should reinforce these obligations and support their full implementation.
We are therefore pleased that, in addition to recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration that documents the resolve by the Heads of State and Government to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, resolution L.6 also benefits from an explicit reference to the NPT and, specifically, to the solemn obligations of States parties, undertaken in article VI of the Treaty.

Our delegations further believe that any initiative aimed at advancing nuclear disarmament should give due prominence to the important ongoing discussion regarding the humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapons detonation, reflecting the fact that at this First Committee meeting, 125 States – a majority of the UN membership – associated themselves by name with the statement delivered by New Zealand during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons. We believe that the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear weapons detonation should remain among the foremost precepts that guide and inform the process of nuclear disarmament. We are therefore pleased that draft resolution L.6 acknowledges States’ deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, whether such use should occur by accident, miscalculation or design.

In supporting draft resolution L.6, our delegations do not see a comprehensive convention as being the only available option for advancing the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons. We would wish to underline the fact that we would be favourably disposed towards any set of effective measures to achieve the objective of complete nuclear disarmament and the maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, regardless of how such measures might be elaborated. We would particularly like to emphasise that, consistent with our obligations assumed under Article VI of the NPT, we remain willing to engage with and pursue negotiations in good faith towards the elaboration of any such measures.

Finally, we welcome the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a follow-up reunion to the High-level meeting of September 26. We see such a conference as, in particular, an opportunity to take stock of and give new impetus to efforts towards achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you.