Explanation of Vote by Austria and Ireland on A/C.1/69/L.16 “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”

Mr. Chairman,

I am taking the floor on behalf of Ireland and Austria regarding draft resolution A/C.1/69/L.16 entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”.

Austria and Ireland have not supported this resolution in the past and has maintained this position also regarding this year’s resolution.

Resolution L.16 does not include any reference to the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and key legal instruments thereof, in particular the NPT. These instruments have been established inter alia with the view of reducing nuclear dangers, advancing nuclear disarmament and preventing nuclear proliferation. While Austria and Ireland are strongly supportive of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons, a resolution that has the objective of prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons but does not contain any references to the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime is, in our view, not sufficient.

Austria and Ireland share the deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, as expressed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We also want to underline that it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances. The catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, cannot be adequately addressed. All efforts must be exerted to eliminate the threat of these weapons of mass destruction. Preventing the use of nuclear weapons is thus a key and urgent challenge for the international community. All states possessing nuclear weapons should take urgent and concrete measures to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons use. The ultimate guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons, however, can only be obtained by the elimination of these weapons of mass destruction.

Austria and Ireland are pleased that the focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has gained so much momentum in recent years and we look forward to broad participation by States, international organizations and civil society at the upcoming Vienna Conference on 8 and 9 December 2014.