Chair,

In previous statements, Norway has reaffirmed its commitment to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This is a long-term objective, which will require sustained efforts along several tracks, such as nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and confidence building measures. Evidently, the broader security landscape will have an impact on our ability to achieve the goal of full elimination of nuclear weapons.

Yet, the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) contains a clear disarmament obligation, which has been further elaborated by the review and extension conference in 1995 and the review conferences of 2000 and 2010. It is essential to foster the confidence needed for balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable reductions of nuclear arsenals in the future. This will enable us to achieve and uphold a world without nuclear weapons that is regulated by a legal framework.

(Check against delivery)
Chair,

The prime challenge today is to preserve and consolidate existing instruments. The NPT remains the cornerstone for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful use. The New START and INF are of great importance. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) demonstrates that diplomacy can achieve tangible results.

Achieving full elimination of nuclear weapons requires the participation and cooperation of both nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states. While the nuclear weapons states bear the prime responsibility for reducing and eventually eliminating their nuclear arsenals, non-nuclear weapons states should also contribute. Nuclear disarmament verification clearly represents a means of achieving this.

The UK-Norway Initiative, which started in 2007, has paved the way for further broadening nuclear weapons verification research to include other non-nuclear weapons states. Furthermore, together with Sweden, the US and the UK, Norway has recently entered into a multi-year arms control simulation initiative called the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership (QNVP). This partnership is conducting an exercise in the UK right now.

Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/67, a group of governmental experts (GGE) will be established by the Secretary-General. The group will draw on verification experience gained and lessons learned from past treaties. We hope and expect that the GGE report will contain practical recommendations for the consideration of the UN General Assembly.
Chair,

Norway remains an active member of the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV).

We need to develop a culture of cooperation and trust, as well as a common understanding of the technical issues of nuclear disarmament verification among a large group of states. Capacity building is another area that is being explored within the IPNDV.

In addition to consolidating existing agreements, a number of other mutually reinforcing building blocks are needed to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Norway looks forward to the outcome of the Preparatory High-level Group on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). My delegation appreciates that open-ended consultations have also been held. We consider the Shannon mandate to be sufficiently flexible to cover all the concerns that could be raised in future FMCT negotiations, including the question of phased inclusion of stocks. It is evident that we need to address stocks in order to reach and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

The irresponsible actions taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) demonstrate how urgent it is to transform the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) from a politically binding norm into a legally binding instrument. Again, Norway calls upon all Annex II States to the CTBT to ratify this instrument. Progress will have a tremendously positive impact on nuclear disarmament.

Chair,

Our ability to abolish nuclear weapons will depend on a credible non-proliferation regime. Such a regime has to be sufficiently robust to uphold a world without nuclear weapons. As a
minimum, all States will have to implement International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Comprehensive Safeguards and the Additional Protocol.

Only in this way will the IAEA be able to declare that nuclear activities in a given situation are solely for peaceful purposes. We should be prepared to consider further measures to tighten the non-proliferation regime.

A world without nuclear weapons will put new demands on the way the international community deals with cases of non-compliance and withdrawals from legal obligations. The experience with the DPRK is not encouraging. We clearly need better ways to address such grave challenges. In the meantime we urge the DPRK to contribute to a diplomatic solution to the current crisis.

Norway supports a fact-based approach to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Chair,

Much has been achieved in the field of nuclear security. Norway is a strong supporter of the Nuclear Security Summits. We must equip the IAEA with the means to carry out its mandate on nuclear security. Furthermore, we urge all Member States to promptly accede to relevant instruments such as the Amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Norway is concerned about the large quantities of highly enriched uranium (HEU) still in use in civilian nuclear facilities. These pose significant proliferation and security risks. Norway actively supports international efforts to develop suitable Low Enriched Uranium
(LEU) fuel that would allow civilian facilities to operate at high performance levels, to convert facilities for the use of LEU fuel, and to coordinate such initiatives internationally.

Chair,

Norway has hosted two international symposiums on HEU minimisation in the civilian sector, and a third one will be held in Oslo 5-7 June 2018. This event will provide an opportunity for closer dialogue on outstanding technical, economic and political questions, so that we can move forward on the transition from HEU to LEU for civilian use. Another vital contribution to both peaceful use and non-proliferation was the inauguration this summer of the IAEA LEU bank in Kazakhstan, to which Norway contributed financially.

To conclude, there is no fast track to a world without nuclear weapons. We need to pursue a forward-looking and comprehensive agenda, which must include a number of mutually supportive building blocks.

Thank you.