Mr. Chairman

At the outset I would like to thank you and your able team for the draft Final Report. It is again a manifestation of your dedication to the task of steering this OEWG to a successful outcome. You have invested hard work into the preparation of the draft Final Report at a time when many of us were enjoying their vacations. And we are convinced that your quest for a true, inclusive, balanced and fair representation of the sessions is laying the foundation for a successful conclusion of our work, i.e. a report adopted by consensus.

As a main sponsor of the GA resolution that created this OEWG, Austria was among those countries that chose a wording that underlined our quest for consensus. I firmly believe that we, all of us together, can achieve this objective, when there is the necessary political will. It is the choice of every single delegation to be constructive or to use our diplomatic skills to erect hurdles, to strive for an adoption by consensus or not.
The main precondition for a constructive outcome seems to us that we can agree that the report should do precisely what the word report means, to capture what has been the main gist of our rich substantial discussions, to give a true reflection of our debates, to relate the content of our work in the OEWG to the GA. We should refrain from the temptation to use the negotiations on the report to try to change the realities of the past which is in this case the substantial discussions held here in February and May. By embarking on your approach, Mr. Chairman, to give a true, inclusive, balanced and fair representation both with regard to the narrative and recommendations part of the report this OEWG can and hopefully will come to a fruitful outcome.

In a number of ways our work in the OEWG discerns itself from our experience in other disarmament bodies over the last years. A lot of new intellectual input, the participation of a much higher number of states in the debates, but also of civil society and a
strong interactivity. All the more we regret - as reflected in the report - that the Nuclear Weapon States and states that possess nuclear weapons chose not to participate in this UN mandated forum. While we certainly respect the choice of every state to participate or not to participate in an open-ended group, their non-participation cannot be held against the value and the outcome of our work here.

While we have an overall positive appraisal of the draft Final Report, there are a number of issues that should be dealt with in a more elaborate way in the draft report, among them the following:

- In our debate we have overcome the artificial fragmentation in seemingly mutually exclusive approaches. Our discussions have shown that we need a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons in all traditional approaches, be it as a building block, as an element of a framework agreement, as part of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention or in form of
a prohibition treaty to be complemented later by further legally binding instruments dealing with verification issues and other matters related to the process of elimination.

• The consideration of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is the underpinning of all security considerations. Therefore there can be no basis for contradiction between human security and international security. Nor can we separate national security from human security, since national security aims at providing security to the population of a given country.

• Over the last years we have become more alarmed at the danger of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of Non-State-Actors and terrorists, an issue that was dealt with in our debate and could be further mirrored in the report.

• Also the increased risk of cyber attacks on nuclear weapon systems and their command and control structures has been emphasized in our debate and merits more coverage in the report.
• We had interesting contributions on the topic of the impact of modernization programs regarding nuclear weapons in our debate last May. They merit to be reflected in the report.

There are many very important positive elements in the report, let me mention only one that is particularly welcome to my country:

The work of the OEWG is clearly in support of, and certainly not in conflict with our endeavors to strengthen the NPT and its implementation, not least with regard to its Article VI. We want to express this clearly.

The report is has to be seen as the outcome of the fulfillment of the mandate of the OEWG. GA resolution 70/33 clearly wanted the OEWG to “Address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.” While stressing also the mandate in OP 3, we would fail in our work, when we would not come up with a clear recommendation in the report
on what has been the main theme in our debate, namely
initiating negotiations on a legally-binding instrument to prohibit
nuclear weapons with urgency.

On the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the use of nuclear
weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki Austria’s Foreign Minister
Sebastian Kurz has expressed today again that we have to
work fervently to achieve a prohibition and elimination of
nuclear weapons. Therefore my country is among the many
states forming a majority that want to start negotiations of a
legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons in 2017
in a conference convened by the GA, open to all states,
international organization and civil society, leading towards their
elimination.