Thank you Mr. Chairperson for giving us the floor,

Amplify is a new growing international network of younger leaders in the field of nuclear abolition. Our network is uniting youth from all over the world, representing different NGOs and individuals, to create opportunities for future collaboration transcending strategic differences. Our common goal is to amplify and strengthen the call for complete nuclear abolition.

This morning we heard from General Cartwright that in order to get to, and stay at zero, we need to act across all age groups. In this regard we would like to draw your attention to the importance of meaningful youth participation in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Young people need to be involved for the same reason that all often underrepresented groups in peace and security should be involved. We have a stake in this too.

Discussions to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations will shape the future of our global community. The current efforts for multilateral disarmament negotiations can be sustainable only if we engage youth, who are now or will one day be decision makers and government leaders.

Including youth should not however be viewed as tokenism or a photo opportunity. Youth should not be confused with inexperience or lack of expertise. Youth, already involved in nuclear disarmament, are often passionate and highly informed and once involved, often stay involved.

Thus we believe that the barriers of meaningful youth participation is not around lack of knowledge or even interest but have more to do with lack of access and opportunity. These are obstacles that can and must be surmounted.

The Open-ended Working Group emerged from a desire to find ways to do nuclear disarmament differently, and there are many ways in which governments, the United Nations and civil society can engage youth in their efforts toward nuclear disarmament in a substantial and meaningful way; here I would like to refer you to our working paper (NGO 26); the 2250 UN resolution on Youth, Peace and Security; and the 2014 Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation on Peace Building. We’d also like
to highlight that the reframing of nuclear weapons discussions to focus Humanitarian Consequences has been immensely successful in providing an entry point for youth.

Changes will need to be made to how nuclear disarmament is done not only to facilitate youth engagement but also to help adapt nuclear disarmament discussions to the 21st century. For us, nuclear weapons are a symbol of a bygone age; a symbol that poses an eminent and existential threat to our present reality and has no place in the future we are creating.

We underline the importance of peace and disarmament education, however, there is a contradiction when States talk about peace, our ‘so called’ common goal of a world without nuclear weapons and give “never again” speeches, and yet still allow for the existence of nuclear weapons, engage in modernization programmes and actively stall disarmament processes. We do not need to hear from nuclear dependent states (as we have heard several times here today) that “now is not the right moment”. History has shown us that significant disarmament treaties were negotiated during the Cold War, inspired by times of crisis and heightened tensions.

Mr Chairperson in conclusion,

The humanitarian consequences of these weapons have been well established. This, coupled with the growing risks and their continued existence, is extremely dangerous. States choosing to stall the process are gambling with our futures, our families and our lives.

The Open-ended working group was brought to life on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We applaud the majority of participating states who are calling for a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons and are ready to act now.

So we look to the rest of you in the room and we urge you not to squander this opportunity, to move forward and start negotiations. And we call upon every State, including the nuclear dependent States, to adopt national legislation prohibiting and criminalizing the manufacture, investment in, testing, deployment, threat or use of nuclear weapons;

And we look forward to collaborating with you more meaningfully in this process.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.