Thank you Mr. President

Let me congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament. You can trust on the full support of my delegation.

In the 70th session of the UNGA First Committee, Finland abstained in the voting on the resolution "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations" that led to the establishment of this open –ended working group.

Finland has nevertheless decided to participate in the work of the group. This working group provides us with one important forum to discuss a number of issues that could contribute to taking forward nuclear disarmament overall and in particular such issues as verification, transparency, confidence building, security and humanitarian aspects as well as legal implications.
The discourse on the humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons addresses concerns of citizens all over the world. We recognize that as long as nuclear weapons exist there is a risk of a catastrophe with immeasurable human and humanitarian costs. And we agree that in order to achieve progress in nuclear disarmament, we need a stronger sense of urgency.

We must aim for a world free of nuclear weapons. To do this, we need to develop unity of purpose and a broader common understanding of the steps that will lead us there. Finland, for our part, has been supportive and has contributed to activities which are based on a gradual approach and on defining building blocks for nuclear disarmament with the aim of gaining a wide acceptance and effectiveness.

Spirit of dialogue and respect for each other’s views is necessary. We believe that progress is possible only if there is engagement also with those states which possess nuclear arms. We need concrete steps in nuclear disarmament, and further restrictions and reductions in warheads and in their delivery systems. The continued implementation of the new START Treaty is a positive example of this, and we encourage to go even further.

For us the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty contains a clear commitment to nuclear disarmament and provides the main institutional framework for multilateral work in this field.

We are confident that the variety of views expressed in the course of the work of the OEWG will be reflected in a balanced manner in the outcome report of the working group.