Mr Chairman,

First let me congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of this OEWG. We recognize the difficult task ahead and would like to express hope that the final result will reflect the full spectrum of opinions expressed during the whole session of our work.

Mr Chairman,

We already have at our disposal a provisional framework of legal and non-legal measures, provisions and norms fundamental to non-proliferation and disarmament. The framework is provisional as some of its elements are already strong and in place, while others are still to be fully enacted.

Latvia believes that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Rigid and comprehensive implementation of initiatives strengthening all three pillars of the NPT is important not only to furthering disarmament, but also ensuring that disarmament is effective, verifiable and irreversible.

In addition to the NPT as a building block of the framework of legal measures, provisions and norms we would like to underline the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system, the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty etc.

Mr. Chairman,

As I mentioned at the outset some elements of the framework need further efforts for full implementation. One such element of particular importance is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT is of great added value to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. It creates a profound legal opposition to nuclear testing, prevents the development of new nuclear weapons designs. The Preparatory Commission of CTBTO has already been established as an effective organization with a global monitoring system. We hope that the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of CTBT this year, as well as the sobering experience of yet another nuclear test by the DPRK, will stimulate progress in bringing the entry into force of the Treaty.
A number of other elements require some additional strengthening efforts from the international community. Among others these include universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and promoting the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Substantive work on other possible elements of the provisional framework is yet to start. Latvia supports the commencement of negotiations on the Treaty Banning Production of Fissile Material. This will be an important step towards eliminating nuclear weapons.

The main focus of this OEWG is to substantively address concrete legal measures, which, as envisioned by many, translates as ban of nuclear weapons. We believe a nuclear ban should not only be the final step of the disarmament process to seal the global zero, but should also be embedded into a whole framework of measures as I have outlined previously. Otherwise, if a ban is sought through a fast-forward approach, we fear that a framework to secure the elimination of nuclear weapons as irreversible, effective, universal and verifiable might not be set up sufficiently.

Mr Chairman,

Let me conclude by confirming that much work lies ahead of the international community and we believe that great results can be achieved only through a truly inclusive dialogue.