Mr President,

As you have encouraged us to an interactive debate, let me react on some of the comments that have been made so far, both by the panelist and some delegations.

Let me first point out that all NPT member states have accepted there is an obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons under Article VI of the treaty. This means there is a clear goal that 191 states have committed themselves to. There is nothing unclear or incomplete about their obligations in this respect. Rather than talking about legal vacuums or gaps, we should therefore implement the law we already have by identifying effective measures for nuclear disarmament and build further on that.

Yesterday Switzerland made the proposal to use this Working Group to systematically assess proposed approaches and to clarify the many questions that exists with regard to these approaches. We support this proposal as this seems to be a logical way forward for our work.

Regardless of the approach chosen, there have been numerous initiatives to create effective measures, including legal measures.
Some of them have already been highly successful in attaining their objectives, such as SALT or START, which reduced certain weapon systems. NewSTART is still successfully being implemented. Furthermore, states have negotiated NWFZ with protocols containing security assurances from NWS. The PTBT, mentioned during yesterday’s panel, bans the majority of nuclear tests. The CTBT has not yet entered into force, yet it is an important multilateral effort with an important normative force, supported by an effectively functioning monitoring system. This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the CTBTO. The final report of the GGE FMCT is a good basis for the start of negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Other legal measures are referred to in a working paper on the Progressive Approach that we will submit tomorrow together with some other states.

Broadening our view, we have heard yesterday how history is full of attempts to limit the right to possess and use a wide range of armament types, varying from prohibiting first use to prohibiting stockpiling, from dumdum ammunition to chemical weapons. And in this context, too, we have seen different measures of effectiveness.

The good news is that this means this OEWG does not need to reinvent the wheel. There are important lessons to be learned from history. The discussions of these two days certainly form a good foundation for that. It would be wise to start by taking a good look at what has worked in the past in order to move forward on effective legal measures on nuclear disarmament.