Mr Chairman

Firstly, I would like to thank Mr Tariq Rauf for his thought provoking summary of transparency issues vis-à-vis nuclear arsenals. Tariq’s record of scholarship on this issue is of course impressive, including through his involvement with SIPRI, which in itself has done an enormous amount to garner public sourced information on nuclear activities.

I also look forward to digesting your report in more detail, Tariq, and also examining in further detail your recommendations.

We note the joint Progressive approach paper picks up on many of the issues you have raised. As our Japanese colleagues have outlined in detail, there have been a range of transparency initiatives that have been pushed in the NPT context by NPDI. Indeed, credit goes to the Japanese delegation for their own paper which they submitted at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We were pleased that a number of the NPDI recommendations were crystallised in the draft outcomes report.

I also want to endorse comments made by our distinguished Austrian colleague, Ambassador Kmentt, on the scope for finding common ground on the issue of transparency. Already we have heard a large level of convergence on this issue. And recommendations from this body would, as Alexander has indicated, also extend to non NPT possessor states, in addition to the Nuclear Weapon States.

Two other issues have been raised in this morning’s discussion. One is an FMCT. Having been directly involved in the GGE on the FMCT, I think there was a very interesting discussion that emerged on the inclusion of stocks. Australia has always maintained that nothing should be off the table in any future negotiation. It is also of significance, that we have seen tabled in the CD a proposal by the US delegation that for the first time made “no mention of the Shannon Mandate”. Perhaps there is an opening here for new ground on advancing an FMCT in the coming months and years.

Also, we note your comments on the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). I think it is acknowledged that this initiative has generated a lot of interest, even if its membership at this stage of the process is not as broad as those assembled in this plenary. We have underlined the utility on several occasions of this OEWG being briefed on its operations.

Two questions:

We note Tariq you have referred several times to strengthening the NPT Review Process. I would be interested in how we can push transparency measures in this context, particularly in the context that the draft outcomes paper was not adopted at the NPT RevCon.

Secondly, I was interested in your final recommendations that the 150 non-nuclear weapon states (excluding the NWS, nuclear possessor states as well as umbrella states) should mobilise their resources to influence, and assume, appointments at a senior level in the UN hierarchy, including in disarmament bodies. This is a novel idea, but I wonder whether this might have a significant
downside. Our Malaysian colleagues have already referred to the challenges this would pose to smaller states which may have resource constraints in pursuing such an objective. Another issue is whether this underplays the potential constructive role that “umbrella states” can play in advancing nuclear disarmament. While we concede that nuclear alliance states are seen by many in this room as part of the problem preventing nuclear disarmament, what is not often acknowledged is the pressure we apply on our alliance partners in our regular exchanges to push for greater transparency; to have frank discussions on issues such as progressing de alerting; and to push for increased confidence building measures that will help progress nuclear disarmament. A proposal that only favoured senior appointments for states which excluded “umbrella states” would close off, in our view, a significant source of leverage and influence. Hence to my question: your views on whether you see umbrella states as having a legitimate role to facilitate global nuclear disarmament efforts?

I thank you Mr Chairman.