Mr Chairman

Firstly, can I thank Beyza Unal and Pavel Podvig for their thoughtful presentations.

It goes without saying that this is a very important issue. And, as the distinguished Irish Ambassador has pointed out earlier, what we are discussing this afternoon is the issue of risk of accidental, mistaken, or unauthorised nuclear weapon detonations, quite separate from a discussion on the global security environment. Both your presentations very usefully focused on this issue.

Reducing risk would also seem to be an issue that, like transparency, attracts a strong level of convergence in this forum. We all want to reduce risk. Those that participated in the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons (HINW) conferences were also given further insights into these risks. And in any risk analysis, when the consequences of a risk actually occurring are grave, the more we need to tackle this issue with urgency.

This then leads me to my second point. In this regard, I would like to second comments made by the distinguished Mexican Ambassador in relation to our need today to focus on “effective measures”. What we would like to hear from this forum, and perhaps we might have to wait till the May meeting for this to happen, are the outlining of concrete effective measures to address this risk. In this regard, Mr Chairman, I note we should be guided by your questions no 7 and 8 in WP3 which provides the outline for our Panel II discussion. I think Pavel, you mentioned that the only “effective” way to reduce risk is to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether. This objective is of course not achievable in the short term. In this regard, I was particularly interested to hear several concrete proposals presented by the distinguished Swiss Ambassador just now.

We have raised the issue of addressing this risk equation in para 9 of our Progressive approach paper. In particular, we have made the linkage between reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international security and stability. We also have addressed this issue in a NPD1 paper that the NPD1 group presented in the lead-up to the 2015 NPT RevCon.

Japan has mentioned an important “related issue”: that of transparency. If measures are being taken to reduce risk, and we understand that some of the nuclear weapon states have put in place measures to reduce risk, we believe that it would be in their interests to provide to non-nuclear weapon states more details of these measures.

I have a question for the panel.

I would like the panel to address the issue of “strategic stability in time of crisis”. Is there a point when a country which has de-alerted nuclear forces would face intense pressure to re-alert those forces in a crisis with a nuclear armed adversary. And in doing so, would this incentivise an adversary to strike before the other side’s force was once again operational?

I thank you Mr Chairman.