Mr President,

Thank you for inviting me to address this timely, and I hope ground-breaking, summit. I will limit myself to a few key issues.

First, the global nuclear non-proliferation regime is fragile and has many shortcomings.

The IAEA’s legal authority is severely limited in some countries. This is because many states have not concluded the required agreements with the Agency. As a result, in over 90 states, the Agency either has no verification authority at all, or its authority is inadequate. That means we often cannot verify whether a country is engaged in clandestine nuclear activities.

Furthermore, our verification mandate is centred on nuclear material. If the Agency is to be expected to pursue possible weaponization activities, it must be empowered with the corresponding legal authority.

A second issue is the growing number of states that have mastered uranium enrichment or plutonium reprocessing. Any one of these states could develop nuclear weapons in a short time, if, for example, it decided to withdraw from the NPT.

To address this, I believe that we need to move from national to multinational control of the nuclear fuel cycle. As a first step, I have proposed the establishment of a low enriched uranium bank to assure states a guaranteed supply of nuclear fuel for their reactors so that they might not need their own enrichment or reprocessing capability.

Our ultimate goal should be the full multinationalization of the fuel cycle as we move towards nuclear disarmament.

A third issue is providing the highest level of security for nuclear and radioactive material. In my view, the biggest risk the world faces today is of extremists getting hold of such material. More than 200 incidents of illicit trafficking, losses or thefts were reported to the IAEA last year. And this might be only the tip of the iceberg. We need to intensify our efforts to secure vulnerable nuclear and radioactive material.

A fourth issue is the need to strengthen the IAEA.

I should emphasize that, at the current level of funding, the IAEA will not be able to fulfil its mission in nuclear verification and security. The Agency infrastructure is dilapidated and we lack state of the art technology key to modern-day verification.
A fifth issue is that the IAEA cannot do its work in isolation. It depends on a supportive political process, with the Security Council at its core.

The Council needs to develop a comprehensive compliance mechanism to address, in a consistent and systematic manner, cases of non-compliance with safeguards obligations or of countries withdrawing from the NPT. This should include giving the Agency the additional authority it may need to deal with specific cases.

A sixth issue is that the Security Council must put more emphasis on addressing the insecurities that lie behind many cases of proliferation, such as endemic conflicts, security imbalances and lack of trust.

Finally, I am gratified to see nuclear disarmament back at the top of the international agenda, as well as recognition of the intrinsic link between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

By demonstrating their irreversible commitment to achieving a world free from nuclear weapons, the weapon states can greatly contribute to the legitimacy of the non-proliferation regime, and gain the moral authority to call on the rest of the world to curb the proliferation of these inhumane weapons.

To turn the ideas discussed today into action will require an environment of mutual trust, which I hope this summit will help to create.