Let me first of all on behalf of the Austrian delegation thank the government of Mexico wholeheartedly for having organized this important conference. Thank you for your unwavering leadership on this issue and your generous hospitality here in Nayarit.

We have heard impressive presentations about the broad range of severe consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and nuclear detonations and we had a good discussion about this very existential issue.

Austria is convinced that it is very important to put the consequences of nuclear weapons at the center of our collective efforts. The more we understand the facts about the broad range and the scale of the consequences, the clearer the case becomes for their elimination. How can an approach to global security that continues to be built on the credible threat of indiscriminate mass annihilation and destruction that endangers all humanity and possibly all life on earth be compatible with a 21st century understanding of international cooperation, global interconnectedness, morality and international law?

It is equally important to understand more about the risks: human error, miscalculation - even madness -, escalation in times of conflict or terrorism. The human factor is always an element of serious risk. As all of us would suffer the consequences, this is an essential question to address for all states. Relying on assurances that the risks are under control is not a responsible policy for states in the long run when dealing with NWs.

The past day and a half has been productive in increasing our understanding of both aspects – humanitarian consequences of nuclear explosion and risks that this could happen. The message is clear: The consequences are unacceptable and the risks are considerable. We need to bring this discourse and the body of compelling humanitarian arguments with even more focus into the international frameworks, such as the NPT and the UN. We need to think creatively what else can be done to ensure that these arguments are heard and translated into norms and actions. We should therefore have a discussion about what the implications are of all the new information of the foreseeable consequences of NWs use within the different areas of International Law.

The conclusion is in our view is also evident. If the consequences are to be prevented, the only way is the urgent, credible and irreversible elimination of NWs. We believe that this Conference – building on the increasing international focus on these issues in the past few years – demonstrates a growing understanding among states that there is a need to act. We need to build this further.

Austria, for its part, is convinced that the humanitarian consequences initiative is essential to change the discourse on nuclear weapons and to move us forward. I am
therefore pleased to inform you that Austria’s Foreign Minister, Sebastian Kurz announced yesterday that Austria will host the 3rd conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons later this year.

Let me quote a few of the points Minster Kurz made in the announcement:

“Nuclear weapons are not only a permanent threat to all humankind but also a relic of the cold war that we must finally overcome. The international nuclear disarmament efforts require an urgent paradigm shift, not the least in light of the danger of further nuclear weapons proliferation.

“Nuclear disarmament is a global task and a collective responsibility. As a member state committed to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), Austria wants to do its share to achieve the goals of this treaty. I will invite to a follow up international conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons to take place in Vienna later this year”.

We very much hope to be able to live up to the excellent standard set by the governments of Norway and Mexico in hosting the first two conferences when we gather in Vienna later this year to take this important work forward. We also look forward to cooperating and working closely with all interested partners in the next few months in the preparation for this conference.

Thank you.