Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members represented at the United Nations, including Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, the Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Nauru. We join previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the PrepCom for the 2005 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

There continues to be threats to humanity represented by the continued possession of nuclear weapons and the attendant possibility of the use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The events of 11 September have made it clear and further highlight that the international community cannot afford the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is, as we all know, the underpinnings of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. In 1995 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders welcomed the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as achieving a long-standing Forum objective. The Forum urged non-signatories to the Treaty to accept the Treaty as soon as possible and also urged the nuclear powers to focus on meeting without delay their obligation under the Treaty to negotiate in good faith towards nuclear disarmament.

In 2000, the Forum Leaders called for active pursuit by the Nuclear Weapons States of the steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference leading to nuclear disarmament. They welcomed the conference’s identification of measures to maintain and further strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. Forum members look forward to reports by the Nuclear Weapons States on progress in implementing their nuclear disarmament commitments.
Mr Chairman

There are two issues of particular concern to Forum members: nuclear weapon free zones in the Southern Hemisphere in particular, and the shipment of radioactive materials through the region.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

The South Pacific Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (the Rarotonga Treaty) has been signed and ratified by all Forum members within the original geographic boundaries of the Treaty. The Former USSR and China have signed and ratified Protocols Two and Three to the Treaty and France, and the United Kingdom, have signed and ratified Protocols One, Two and Three. Although the United States has signed all three Protocols, it has yet to ratify them. We take this opportunity to again call on the United States to ratify the Protocols to the Treaty.

We recall and support the UNGA resolutions calling upon states parties and signatories to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba to pursue the common goals envisaged in those treaties, promote the nuclear-weapons-free status of the Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas, and explore and implement further ways and means of cooperating among themselves and their treaty agencies.

We also recall the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, adopted by consensus, which recognised the continuing contributions of these treaties towards the achievement of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament objectives, particularly in the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas and towards keeping the areas covered by these treaties free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with international law.

Shipment of Radioactive Materials

Mr Chairman

The Forum has had a continuing concern with the shipment of radioactive materials through the region, particularly the potential environmental and economic consequences of an accident.

Forum members recall that the 2000 NPT Review Conference underlined the importance of effective national and international regulations for the protection of States concerned, from the risks of transport of radioactive materials. The Conference affirmed that it was in the interests of all states that any transportation of radioactive materials be conducted in compliance with the relevant international standards of nuclear safety and security and environmental protection, without prejudice to the freedoms, rights and obligations of navigation provided for in international law. The Conference took note of the concerns of Small Island Developing States and other coastal states with regard to the transport of radioactive materials by sea.

The Conference recalled resolution GC(43)/Res/11 of the General Conference of the IAEA adopted by consensus in 1999, and invited states shipping radioactive materials to provide, as appropriate, assurances to concerned States, upon their request, that the national regulations of the shipping state take transport regulations into account and to provide them with relevant information relating to shipments of such materials. The information provided should in no case be contradictory to measures of physical safety and security.

The Conference also noted that States Parties have been working bilaterally and through international organisations to improve cooperation and exchange of information among the states concerned. In this context, the Conference also called on States parties to continue to work bilaterally and through international organisations to examine and further improve measures and international regulations relevant to international maritime transportation of radioactive materials and spent fuel.
The Conference further noted the existence of various national and international liability mechanisms, and stressed the importance of having effective liability mechanisms in place. Forum members have been working with the States responsible for the shipment of radioactive materials through the region in order to address the Forum’s concern with such shipments.

Forum members support the promotion of initiatives to examine and further improve measures and international regulations relevant to the international maritime transportation of radioactive materials and spent fuel, including achievement of the highest possible safety standards, consistent with international law. Forum members have called for effective liability mechanisms and for shipping states to provide assurance of compensation in the event of an incident where there was no release of radioactivity. The Forum also stresses the importance of arrangements for prior notification and consultations with coastal states, done in accordance with relevant international instruments.

Mr Chairman

Pacific Islands Forum members recognise and fully support the NPT's vital role in helping to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as efforts to move forward in the process of achieving their total elimination. In this regard, the unequivocal undertaking to achieve the total elimination of nuclear arsenals and the 13 practical steps for disarmament agreed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference constitute an important landmark that we, as States Parties, should be working to implement. As Forum States we stand ready to assist in any way with implementation of these practical steps and other progressive efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Thank You