Statement on the First Cluster on behalf of the European Union

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Mr. Chairman

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Accession Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, Candidate Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA countries and members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The EU is committed to the preservation of the integrity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This is enshrined in the EU Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction agreed by our Heads of State and Government in December 2003. Integral to this Strategy is our conviction that a multilateral approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation provides the best way to maintain international order. These principles both inform and underpin the approach of the European Union to this the Third Preparatory Committee of the 2005 Review Conference of the NPT.

The EU continues to regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament under Article VI and an important element in the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. On the occasion of this meeting, the EU reiterates its support for the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference and the Decisions and Resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. We look forward to the consideration of all relevant issues during this meeting.

Mr Chairman

We welcome the accession to the Treaty in 1992 and 2003 respectively of Cuba and Timor Leste. Cuba's accession to the NPT and to the Tlatelolco Treaty made the nuclear weapons free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean complete. The EU Member States continue to attach great importance to achieving the universality of, and universal compliance with the NPT. In this connection we regret that there are three countries, India, Israel and Pakistan, remaining outside the Treaty. In accordance with the EU Common Position on the universalisation and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery, adopted in November 2003, we continue to call on them to accede unconditionally to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States.
The EU deplores the announcement of the DPRK of its intention to withdraw from the NPT. We continue to urge the DPRK to return to full compliance with its international non-proliferation obligations under the NPT including its Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. Any clandestine nuclear weapons programme should be completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantled. The EU restates its firm resolve to contribute to the search for a peaceful solution, through negotiations, to the DPRK nuclear issue and welcomes the dialogue within the framework of the Six Party Talks in this connection.

The EU continues to monitor the situation in South Asia. We note the declared moratoria by India and Pakistan on nuclear testing and their willingness to participate in the negotiation of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We expect that they will take and apply all necessary measures towards fulfilling their aforementioned promises. We further note with appreciation the inclusion of nuclear confidence building measures as part of the recently announced composite dialogue between India and Pakistan. We call upon India and Pakistan to accede to the NPT, and to place all their nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the IAEA.

The EU remains committed to the full implementation of the resolutions on Middle East adopted by the United Nations Security Council and the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. We call upon all States in the region that have not yet done so, to accede to the biological and chemical weapons conventions and to the NPT. The EU calls upon the States of the region to establish an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as of other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We believe that the accession of all States in the area to the IAEA’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocol should be a priority for the international community as a whole and would represent a crucial contribution to an overall improvement for the security and confidence in the Middle East. Israel’s accession to the NPT, and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the IAEA is of great importance to the EU as it would contribute to the peace and stability of the region and the prospects of an eventual settlement in the Middle East.

The EU acknowledges the importance of nuclear-weapons-free zones, established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. They enhance global and regional peace and security, urgently needed as the present political environment indicates. The EU also underlines the importance of the concept of zones free of weapons of mass destruction, both nuclear and other, and their means of delivery, envisaged in UNSC Resolution 987 on the Middle East. We therefore welcome and support the signature and ratification by the nuclear weapon States of the relevant protocols of nuclear weapons free zones following the completion of the necessary consultations.
Mr Chairman,

The EU is convinced that the application of the principle of irreversibility to nuclear disarmament, nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures, contributes to the maintenance and reinforcement of international peace, security and stability. Transparency by all NPT Parties in fulfilling all their Treaty obligations and respective commitments in the NPT 2000 Final Document, further contributes towards international stability and progress in disarmament.

Some 171 States have now signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, of which 117 have ratified. The EU reiterates that it attaches the utmost importance to the entry into force of the CTBT at the earliest possible date. We call upon all States that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty to do so without delay and without conditions. We urge in particular those States named in Annex 2 of the Treaty, whose ratification is required for entry into force to do so. In this context we welcome the recent ratification of Algeria to the CTBT which brings us closer to both universalisation and entry into force. Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the EU urges all States to abide by a moratorium and to refrain from any actions, which are contrary to the obligations and provisions of the CTBT. The EU is actively involved in promoting universal adherence to CTBT and participated actively in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT held in Vienna last September. We take this opportunity to commend the work of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO.

The EU regrets the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and is convinced that the new threats to peace and security require that this standstill be overcome as soon as possible. The EU is committed to reaching a consensus on a programme of work in the CD and welcomes the fact that new ideas have been put forward over the last year. We appreciate these efforts aimed at promoting consensus for a programme of work. In the context of the NPT, recommencement of substantive work within the CD is particularly significant in relation to the negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

The EU policy is to pursue an international agreement on the prohibition of the production of nuclear materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The EU attaches special importance to the negotiation of a non-discriminatory and universal Treaty banning the production of such fissile material, which would strengthen both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and thus international security. The EU and its Member States have actively worked in the Conference on Disarmament in the search for a consensus to launch a negotiation on the basis of the report of the special co-ordinator and the mandate contained therein.
Until a cut-off Treaty enters into force, all States are urged to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material destined for nuclear weapons. The EU welcomes the actions of those of the five nuclear weapon States that have such a moratorium in place.

We have also welcomed the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty between the Russian Federation and the USA on strategic offensive reductions till 2012. It is an important step in the context of international security and a contribution to the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, the principles of irreversibility and transparency remain important.

The issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons was included in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. Reductions in these weapons are an integral part of the nuclear arms control and disarmament process. We look forward to the fulfillment of the US and Russian 1991-1992 Presidential declarations on unilateral reductions of their holdings of the tactical nuclear weapons, as well as of the commitments made by relevant States at the 2000 Review Conference. We encourage all States concerned to start negotiations on an effectively verifiable agreement to best achieve the greatest reductions of these weapons.

We underline the importance of international co-operation for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The EU and its Member States fully support and contribute significantly to the G8 Global Partnership, which contributes effectively to disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The comprehensive set of non-proliferation principles set out at the G8 Kananaskis Summit in 2002 constitute the criteria to be adopted, pursued and implemented to allow effective international co-operation in the field of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The European Union is committed to continuing its cooperation programmes for non-proliferation and disarmament. We consider that cooperative threat reduction is an effective tool of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are currently actively considering expansion of the EU programmes in this area.

We all know that there are three pillars to the NPT: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses. In particular, non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. The EU will continue to encourage the progress made towards systematic and progressive efforts towards disarmament, and will remain fully committed to the effective implementation of Article VI of the NPT and of the 1995 Decision and the 2000 Final Document.

Thank you, Mr Chairman