Madame Chair,

At the outset, let me congratulate you and our Chairman for the constructive way in which you have been conducting our work so far. I assure you of the continued support of my delegation.

Today, I take the floor on the topic of non-strategic nuclear weapons, an issue that Finland has addressed actively in the NPT context since 1995. In the new security environment of today, we consider the need for substantial deliberations and work on this issue more evident than ever before.

Finland fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union. As mentioned, the Presidential declarations of 1991 and 1992 created a basis for unilateral reductions of holdings of tactical nuclear weapons. The commitments made later and also during this PrepCom by the relevant states have strengthened our expectations for a fulfillment of these declarations.

Transparency and openness are important factors in the dismantling process of tactical nuclear weapons. We hope that there will be enough political will to guide the parties concerned to even stronger non-proliferation and disarmament measures in this context.

Finland has shown interest in and appreciation for the working papers on non-strategic nuclear weapons submitted during this preparatory process and stands ready to work on recommendations to the Review Conference next year. In this security building process the key words are confidence, cooperation and predictability. The importance of the matter is underscored by the fact that this is not only a question of disarmament and non-proliferation, but also of counter-terrorism and nuclear safety.

Madame Chair, let me assure you that Finland continues to do its best, together with other countries, to implement the measures agreed upon in the last NPT Review Conference and we stand ready to prepare new ones for the Review Conference next year.

Thank you.