Mr Chair,

Nuclear disarmament is a fundamental pillar of the NPT. It could be argued that the name Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is misleading. It is as much about disarmament as about non-proliferation. The overall objective of the NPT, as laid out in the preamble and not least in Article VI, is to achieve total elimination of nuclear arsenals. This commitment has been further strengthened by the outcomes of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference.

The decisions taken in 1995 and 2000 still stand. Norway maintains that the 13 steps provide a good framework for nuclear disarmament. However, they must be revisited in light of current realities. It will be an important task for this meeting, and in particular for the 2010 Conference, to take stock on the implementation of the 1995 and 2000 outcomes. While there has been progress in some areas, there can be no doubt that the commitments made nine years ago are far from fulfilled.

Norway welcomes the new and encouraging signals from the nuclear weapons states. There is now reason to hope that the 2010 Review Conference will agree on a new and forward-looking disarmament agenda. Such an outcome would require the constructive contribution by all States Parties, nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states alike.

The disarmament agenda should not only cover the five-year period up to the 2015 Review Conference, but also look beyond that date. There should be no doubt about the long-term objective: a safer world without nuclear weapons.

(Check against delivery)
We need to set comprehensive and mutually reinforcing targets. Some can be reached in few years, others will require more time. In any case, it will be vital that the NPT is able to monitor progress. This will require enhanced transparency.

In the very short term, even before the Review Conference itself, the US and the Russian Federation must agree on a new strategic arms reduction treaty. It is the expectation of my delegation that this treaty will contain irreversible reductions that are far deeper than those set out in the existing START and SORT agreements. By agreeing on deep cuts, the US and Russian Federation will be taking the lead. A new treaty should be seen as step in an unequivocal commitment by nuclear weapons states to eliminate their arsenals. We will also need to see progress with respect to sub-strategic nuclear weapons. Eventually all nuclear weapons states must become engaged in arms reduction diplomacy.

Mr, Chair, Non-nuclear weapons states must take part in the verification process so that they can be confident that reductions are really taking place. With this in view, Norway, the UK, the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), and relevant Norwegian institutions have set up a project to examine how inspectors from non-nuclear weapons states can affirm that nuclear weapons are actually destroyed, without acquiring sensitive information.

My delegation is convinced that it is possible to make substantial advances in the multilateral disarmament process. Norway welcomes statements by the US administration on the CTBT. We are now closer to a possible formal entry into force of this Treaty than we have been in more than 10 years. Yet, this is not just up to one nation. We urge all Annex II states to ratify the CTBT without delay. It goes without saying that all states are urged not to take any action that could undermine the purpose of the CTBT. Although it has not formally entered into force, Norway believes that this Treaty has – for all practical purposes – established a norm. We must ensure that it continues to do so by completing its monitoring and verification system.

FMCT negotiations have long been overdue. There is now a new window of opportunity for commencing negotiations to reach a FMCT, which includes verification. The 2010 Conference should call for the conclusion of the FMCT within the next review cycle. If the CD remains paralysed, we should explore other avenues. Indeed all States Parties to the NPT should be able to contribute to the FMCT negotiations.

The conclusion of the FMCT would be an important qualitative disarmament measure, but its full potential will not be achieved if it only bans future production of fissile material for weapons purposes. We must also address the issue of existing stock. The implementation of the Trilateral Initiative between the US, The Russian Federation and the IAEA was one of the 13 steps agreed in 2000. Regrettfully, the Initiative has not been carried out. Now, we should build on the knowledge and structure gained from the Initiative and consider new avenues for enhanced transparency and security of existing stocks, and identify possible ways of
destruction or conversion for peaceful uses. Norway appreciates the voluntary steps taken by some nuclear weapons states to down-blend highly enriched uranium from military grade to material for civilian purposes. More could be done. Down-blending is an example of how disarmament can actually support peaceful uses.

As stipulated in the 2000 outcome, the role of nuclear weapons in security policies should be reduced. There are a number of ways to achieve this, such as establishing regional nuclear weapons free zones, and nuclear weapons states reaffirming and even codifying negative security assurances. My delegation will address this issue during the discussion on nuclear disarmament. Another way of diminishing the predominance of nuclear weapons is for nuclear weapons states to continue and even accelerate the process of lowering the alert level of deployed weapons.

Mr Chair,

It is vital that key multilateral treaties such as the CTBT and FMCT are in place by 2015. But above all, we must aim for a situation where the world’s nuclear weapons are counted in hundreds or at the most a few thousand, and are no longer at the current estimated level of 25,000.

My delegation fully realises that the lower the number achieved, the harder it will be to make additional reductions. No one expects reaching zero to be easy. But we must at least start exploring the conditions needed to achieve full elimination. This could be a task for the next Review Cycle. At the same time, my delegation remains convinced that a credible and water-tight non-proliferation regime is a key factor.

Thank you, Mr. Chair