Mr. Chairman,

1) As highlighted in our general statement on Monday, this review cycle is of crucial importance. It will largely determine to what extent the NPT is a credible framework for nuclear disarmament. The forward looking action plan that was agreed in 2012 may not be perfect. If implemented credibly, however, it would put us on a right track towards a world without nuclear weapons. By 2015 there should be clarity whether we are moving in this direction in a credible manner. Contrary to what happened after the 13 steps that were agreed in 2000, words must be matched with action. Nuclear weapon states have the prime responsibility for nuclear disarmament. We look upon them to demonstrate that the commitments they have undertaken are put into concrete actions and we would like to express our hope that we will see such action between now and 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

2) We hope that by 2015 we will have seen clear steps to diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. Continued large-scale and long-term investments into the modernisation of nuclear weapons arsenals, for that matter, are not conducive for this credibility and, in our view, incompatible with the disarmament commitments of nuclear weapons states and the aspirations of global conscience for this goal. The CTBT will have to be brought into force or at least significantly closer to this goal. Further progress on bilateral US-Russia negotiations should have been made. Multilateral disarmament negotiations need to have been initiated, such as on an FMCT, and serious multilateral processes will have to be on track on other important nuclear disarmament issues, to list but the most important issues. In addition, we look forward to nuclear weapons states fulfilling the important transparency commitments contained in the action plan. We do not underestimate the challenges for nuclear weapons states related to nuclear disarmament and we do not expect that all actions will have been implemented by the time of the next Review Conference. I would like to stress again, however, that by 2015 the direction with respect to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons needs to be clear and credible. It is the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States that nuclear weapon States restrain themselves in the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. Thus Austria has supported a side-event on nuclear weapon modernization at this PrepCom. Furthermore, Austria and many other States are determined to heed to the call "to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons" in a way that corresponds to the five-point proposal of the UN-SG.

Mr. Chairman,

3) The prime responsibility of nuclear weapons states notwithstanding, Article 6 is an obligation of all States party to the NPT. The action plan reflects this by listing many actions that can and should be undertaken by all. Austria is determined to do its part to give this action plan a fair chance. We will report on actions that we have undertaken and encourage all states to do the same. We should use this action plan as a tool for implementation and a focussed debate. It will allow us a serious and open assessment in 2015 of where we stand.

Mr. Chairman,

4) In response to action 20, Austria would like to highlight the following points related to the implementation of the outcome of the 2010 Conference in addition to the comprehensive report that has been submitted by the European Union, which Austria fully supports.

5) Austria would like to underscore its firm commitment with respect to the principles and objectives of nuclear disarmament agreed to in 2010. This includes in particular, the resolve to seek a world without nuclear weapons and the continued validity of the 2000 Final document as well as the importance of universality of the NPT. Moreover, I would also like to underscore the importance of the recognition contained in the 2010 Final Document of "the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and the need to comply at all times with international law and international humanitarian law". Austria was pleased to work with a group of like-minded states on a joint statement on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament. We are convinced of the validity of this approach and of the need to fundamentally change the discourse on nuclear weapons. We need to move away from a debate that is still dominated by outdated military security concepts originating from cold war enemy and threat perceptions. Instead, we need to foster the understanding that any use of nuclear weapons would be morally repugnant, incompatible with international law, in particular with fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and devastating in its effects for the whole world and all of humankind. Austria is committed to developing this approach further and we look forward to working closely with interested states and civil society who will have to play a crucial role in this respect.

Mr. Chairman,
6) With respect to Action 1 and Austria’s commitment to pursue a world without nuclear weapons, I would like to recall that in 1999, the Austrian Parliament adopted a constitutional law (149/1999) on “A nuclear-free Austria”. In its article 1, the law stipulates that “It is prohibited to produce, stockpile, transfer, test or use a nuclear weapon in Austria. It is further prohibited to establish installations for the stockpiling of nuclear weapons in Austria”. More recently, Austria’s Federal President stated on the occasion of the September 2009 UN Security Council Summit that “The prospect of a world without nuclear weapons must become a goal shared by all States. Austria supports the idea of a Nuclear Weapons Convention (…)”. Moreover, in March 2010 the Austrian Parliament adopted a decision supported by all parties calling on the government to work for a world without nuclear weapons and support the UNSG’s five point plan. The Austrian government has consistently and for decades supported nuclear disarmament and we will continue to do so.

7) Austria fully supports implementation of Actions 6, 7 and 15, which call for negotiations on an FMCT and serious multilateral processes to be initiated on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and in the drafting of the Vienna Group of 10 working paper. The crucial role of the CTBT and the importance of its entry into force are raised on a regular basis in bilateral, regional and global meetings by the Austrian Minister for European and International Affairs, as well as by other high-level Austrian officials, including parliamentarians. Corresponding reports are submitted to Article XIV Conferences of the CTBT. While Austria raises the issue with all states that have not yet ratified the Treaty, the ratification of Annex II states is particularly important. The Actions related to the CTBT do not say that it is necessary to wait for the ratification of a particular Annex II state. Austria would like to appeal to all Annex II states to take serious ratification steps as soon as possible. While we hope that the expressed US commitment to ratification will be followed up as soon as possible, we appeal to China to live up to its global role and responsibility and ratify the treaty without delay. In addition, we appeal to India and Pakistan to capitalise on the huge confidence building potential of the CTBT and to sign and ratify the CTBT as a means to halt the dangerous arms race trajectory that we currently see unfolding in Asia. Moreover, Iran should use the CTBT to build confidence as regards the intentions of its nuclear program and all states of the region, including notably Egypt and Israel, should follow suit. Austria also fully supports the build-up of the CTBT verification regime which has reached a very mature and impressive level. Austria has provided voluntary financial contributions to the CTBT for a variety of activities. Let me mention in this context, the successful science and technology conferences in 2009 and 2011 to which we contributed significantly.

8) Actions 12 - 14: Austria fully supports the CTBT as a key pillar of both, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and collaborates in the drafting of the Vienna Group of 10 working paper. The crucial role of the CTBT and the importance of its entry into force are raised on a regular basis in bilateral, regional and global meetings by the Austrian Minister for European and International Affairs, as well as by other high-level Austrian officials, including parliamentarians. Corresponding reports are submitted to Article XIV Conferences of the CTBT. While Austria raises the issue with all states that have not yet ratified the Treaty, the ratification of Annex II states is particularly important. The Actions related to the CTBT do not say that it is necessary to wait for the ratification of a particular Annex II state. Austria would like to appeal to all Annex II states to take serious ratification steps as soon as possible. While we hope that the expressed US commitment to ratification will be followed up as soon as possible, we appeal to China to live up to its global role and responsibility and ratify the treaty without delay. In addition, we appeal to India and Pakistan to capitalise on the huge confidence building potential of the CTBT and to sign and ratify the CTBT as a means to halt the dangerous arms race trajectory that we currently see unfolding in Asia. Moreover, Iran should use the CTBT to build confidence as regards the intentions of its nuclear program and all states of the region, including notably Egypt and Israel, should follow suit. Austria also fully supports the build-up of the CTBT verification regime which has reached a very mature and impressive level. Austria has provided voluntary financial contributions to the CTBT for a variety of activities. Let me mention in this context, the successful science and technology conferences in 2009 and 2011 to which we contributed significantly.

9) Action 19 and 22: In Austria’s view, increased cooperation by all stakeholders is of key importance for sustained progress on nuclear disarmament. The role of the UN is indispensable in this respect. I am pleased to report that, following the announcements of Foreign Minister Spindelegger at the 2010 Review Conference, the newly established Vienna office of the UN-Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) started operating a few months ago. It will facilitate closer cooperation and effective interaction in all areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control with Vienna-based organizations. In addition the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-proliferation (VCDNP) started working one year ago. It has already changed the landscape in Vienna by providing a forum for serious exchange between diplomats and academics. A large number of high-profile ad high-quality events have been organised on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and contributed greatly to stimulate our work here in Vienna. I am particularly pleased about the educational and training activities provided by the Centre which will have a significant long-term effect. We are pleased that the substantial Austrian financial support for the ODA Office and the VCDNP is making an important contribution to an increased cooperation to our collective work. With respect to disarmament education, I would like to highlight also the very successful “Critical Issues Forum” that brought high school students from the nuclear weapon states Russia and the USA and non-nuclear weapon states Austria and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Vienna to attend the PrepCom and work on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. This demonstrates our firm view that nuclear issues are a concern for all states. Finally, I would like to mention the working paper on disarmament education that we have submitted to this PrepCom together with Japan.

Mr. Chairman,

10) Let me close by reiterating our commitment to the NPT and the implementation of the 2010 conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions. We should use the opportunity give to strengthen the cohesion for this important treaty. Credible progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons is the best and only viable way to achieve this goal.

Thank You