First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
30 April – 11 May 2012

Cluster II
Delegation of Austria
Statement by Ms Christine Göstl
7 May 2012

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union has delivered statements, including on cluster II, which the Austrian delegation fully supports. In addition, the European Union has elaborated a working paper explaining the implementation of the NPT 2010 Review Conference conclusions and recommendations for follow-on action.

In addition, Austria has worked within the Vienna Group of 10 on a number of working papers, some of which relate to cluster II. Let me also refer to the general statement that was delivered by Australia on behalf of the Vienna Group of 10.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few aspects and also to add a few remarks from the Austrian perspective.

The European Union had stated that at this PrepCom we should exchange information on implementing the Action Plan and also review relevant issues that are absent or inadequately reflected in the Action Plan. The latter refers, for example, to progress the NPT States Parties need to make in bringing into force additional protocols to the comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA. As explained in some detail in the working paper of the Vienna Group of 10 on compliance and verification, the measures contained in the Model Additional Protocol form an integral part of the IAEA safeguards system.

Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with the Additional Protocol constitute the current IAEA verification standard, the best we have been able to achieve so far. Only when both are in place, will the IAEA be able to apply the whole spectrum of verification measures that are necessary for being able to arrive at safeguards conclusions that provide credible assurances regarding the ABSENCE of undeclared nuclear material and activities. This is crucial for building confidence. Modern-day proliferation concerns are related to undeclared, or to the suspicion, based on credible information, of undeclared, nuclear material and activities. Even when both, a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and an Additional Protocol, are in place, it may take quite a number of years before the IAEA can conclude that all nuclear material in a State remained in peaceful activities. This verification of the correctness and completeness of a State's declarations is extremely important under normal conditions and the basis for international cooperation.

Furthermore, such verification is even more crucial in situations when States have suspicions about the peaceful nature of the nuclear activities of another State. Rather than being obliged to make a judgement about the compliance of another State solely on the basis of unverified information from individual sources, it is in the interest of all States that the IAEA is given the authority of the Additional Protocol, and the necessary resources, to conduct the kind of
standardized verification that will allow it to arrive at credible conclusions that clarify the non-proliferation credentials of a State. Evidently, this is also beneficial for any State that encounters mistrust from other States. In the end, such a robust safeguards system that is universally applied will generate mutual trust and confidence and facilitate robust and complete nuclear disarmament measures.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to finish my intervention by confirming that Austria, as part of the European Union as well as in its national capacity, has made efforts to support and to diligently implement the actions in the non-proliferation cluster, i.e. actions 23 to 46 of the action plan. Regarding export controls, physical protection and illicit trafficking, Austria has all relevant measures in place. In this regard, I would also like to draw the attention of States Parties to the respective working papers of the Vienna Group of 10 as well as to a working paper on the Minimization of Highly Enriched Uranium submitted by Austria and Norway.

Thank you Mr Chairman.