Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered within this Cluster by the European Union. We would like to add the following brief comments in a national capacity.

While Ireland has chosen not to include nuclear power in its energy mix, we nevertheless recognise the right of all State Parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under Article IV of the Treaty. During the Cluster II debate, we noted that an irreducible precondition for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is adherence to, and full compliance with, the non-proliferation and verification requirements of the Treaty. It is equally the case that the highest levels of safety and security must apply at all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle.

While nuclear applications can and do make very positive contributions in the areas of health, water management, agriculture, food safety and nutrition, energy needs and concerns, and the environment, they do raise very significant safety issues for each of us.

As mentioned in our statement on disarmament the progress that has been made by humanity since 1945 is remarkable, this is particularly so with regard to advances made with regard to healthcare. As the Director General of the IAEA has recently reminded us all, cancer kills more people globally than HIV / AIDS, Malaria and TB combined. This is a particular issue of concern for many developing countries. The IAEA’s Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) is one demonstration of the concrete benefits that international cooperation on the peaceful application of nuclear technology can bring. While the NPT has nearly reached universality, the benefits accruing from it have not, perhaps, been as widely spread. My delegation is considering ways to respond positively to the Director General’s call for support for initiatives such as PACT and we would encourage other delegations to do likewise.
Mr. Chairman,

It is now two years since the Fukushima Daiichi accident, which reminded us of the risks involved in generating nuclear energy and the consequent need to have the highest possible standards of safety in place. And, while the implementation of such safety standards is primarily a responsibility at the national level, the trans-boundary nature of nuclear events underlines clearly the need for international cooperation in this area.

Ireland therefore welcomes the international community’s improved focus on nuclear safety issues since 2011. Central to any international effort to improve the global nuclear safety regime will of course be the International Atomic Energy Agency. We commend the IAEA’s continuing efforts to coordinate and share lessons learned from Fukushima.

Mr. Chairman,

Ireland attended and saw great value in the Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, hosted by the Government of Japan in cooperation with the IAEA in December 2012. That Conference followed the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, held in June 2011, the High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security convened by the UN Secretary-General in September 2011 and the endorsement of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety by the General Conference at its fifty-fifth regular session, also in September 2011.

We believe it will be essential not only to achieve full implementation of the Action Plan but to keep it under constant review as new lessons are learned and weaknesses identified. Periodic conferences and meetings such as those I have just mentioned are an important means of sharing lessons learned and considering possible further means of strengthening the nuclear safety regime.

Mr. Chairman,

As a coastal State, Ireland welcomes the ongoing dialogue between interested coastal and shipping States, regarding government to government communication in the area of the maritime transport of radioactive materials. We welcome the IAEA’s participation in the process and we look forward to reviewing progress at next September’s General Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

It is very clear that nuclear emergencies, whether accidental or deliberate, are not national events; they do not respect borders. It is proper and prudent that our efforts towards prevention should involve a high degree of cooperation.

The lack of progress on disarmament over many decades has meant that this third pillar of the NPT has increasingly become a weight-bearing pillar. The main inducement to remaining compliant with non-proliferation obligations is access to peaceful uses. It is important that we protect this pillar with robust safeguards and stringent safety standards.