Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the chair of the second Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. You can count on the full support of the Estonian delegation. Aligning ourselves fully with the statement on behalf of the European Union, we would like to make some remarks on issues that Estonia attaches particular importance to.

We have gathered here today to give our assessment of the current review cycle of the NPT- the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime- with mixed emotions. The successful Arms Trade Treaty negotiations in New York enhanced our confidence in effective multilateralism and its tangible results in the area of arms control. At the same time, the non-proliferation regime is being challenged by provocative actions and inappropriate threats. We strongly condemn the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK, most recently on 12 February 2013 and all the subsequent provocative acts and aggressive rhetoric, considering these to be clear violations of UN Security Council Resolutions and call on the regime of the DPRK to avoid any further provocations that could deteriorate regional and global security.

The DPRK has ceased all cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has not returned to full compliance with its NPT safeguards obligations. The agency has not been able to implement full safeguards measures in the DPRK for almost a decade now. According to Article X of the NPT, each State Party exercising its national sovereignty has the right to withdraw from the Treaty. However, the withdrawal should be carried out without previous violations of treaty obligations. The lessons learned motivate us to consider how to reduce any incentive to abuse Article X. The NPT review cycle offers a good opportunity for working on those issues with an aim of addressing them at the next Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman. The 2010 NPT Review conference Action Plan was indeed very ambitious and the health of the whole review cycle depends on how we can best achieve those tasks stipulated in the document. One of the most delicate issues concerns the Conference on the establishment of a
Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, scheduled to take place in 2012. While regretting the postponement of the conference, we reaffirm our full support for the tireless efforts of Ambassador Jaakko Laajava in facilitating the preparatory process. The matter is sensitive and requires a lot of trust and confidence between the relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Chairman. Article VI of the NPT constitutes a solid foundation where rule of law in disarmament can be built on. Creating conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons, without jeopardising international stability and diminishing security, requires further bilateral as well as multilateral efforts. Enhancing the transparency of existing nuclear arsenals and increasing mutual confidence between nuclear weapon states are necessary elements of taking nuclear disarmament forward. We take note of the progress in implementing the new START treaty and welcome the pursuit for a future agreement between the US and Russia for broad and reciprocal reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons- including tactical nuclear weapons, which have not been covered by any legally binding arms control agreement.

As for multilateral disarmament, we deeply regret that another year is going by with the Conference on Disarmament (CD) unable to start negotiations or even agree on a program for its work. The inability of the CD to fulfil its mandate is a major obstacle in implementing Article VI of the NPT– namely to pursue negotiations in good faith on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The next logical multilateral step towards nuclear disarmament is to start negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) – a universal agreement banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Despite lacking a binding and universal instrument, states concerned could establish a moratorium on the production of weapons-grade fissile material. A good example of norm-setting practice without complete universalization is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), where most of the Annex II states have imposed a moratorium on nuclear tests. A moratorium, however, is still a voluntary commitment that cannot fully substitute the legal obligations imposed by treaties. Therefore we urge the states, particularly those whose adherence is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify the treaty without further delay.
Despite all these concerns, we should also keep in mind positive improvements – notably in the field of **export control**. Strong and effective export controls ensure that nuclear trade for peaceful purposes does not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Nuclear Suppliers Group is working hard to keep pace with the changing world. We would like to recognize the importance of effective export controls and encourage all states to make use of multilaterally agreed guidelines and principles in developing their own national export controls.

Mr. Chairman, the first session of Preparatory Committee in Vienna last year was dominated by a constructive atmosphere and co-operative spirit. We do hope that Vienna spirit has proliferated also to Geneva and will help you guide this very important meeting to a successful conclusion.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.