Mr. Chairman,

At the beginning, I would like to refer to the statements by the European Union, including on cluster II, which the Austrian delegation fully supports. In addition, Austria has worked within the Vienna Group of 10 on a number of “Vienna issues”, 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. Furthermore, the Austrian national report submitted last year as well as this year’s up-date cover all pillars of the NPT.

Now, I would only like to take the opportunity to high-light a few aspects and also to add a few remarks from the Austrian perspective.

At this session of the Preparatory Committee, we are taking stock, and we should also start looking into the future. Past years have shown that despite efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and extending it to the remaining countries, the comprehensive safeguards system established by the IAEA pursuant to the NPT is yet to become universally applied. At the same time, we have seen in the history of the known proliferation cases that strengthening the safeguards system has at least two important effects: first, with the effective implementation of a strengthened safeguards system, it will be possible to detect undeclared activities; second, having such an effective system in place results in increased confidence of the international community of the peaceful nature of the nuclear programmes in individual countries. This reduces mistrust and the likelihood of conflicts about alleged nuclear weapons programmes.

While the costs and efforts related to intrusive inspection regimes seem high, the peace dividend certainly outweighs these resource-intensive efforts. This is certainly true in regions that are prone to conflict, where transparency, mutual trust and confidence are lacking. In this spirit, Austria has been contributing to the talks of the EU3+3 and Iran by providing the venue and related services. We hope for a successful conclusion of these talks.
Mr. Chairman,

as nuclear technology evolves and spreads wider across the globe, export control regimes have to be adjusted. In past years, the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group have undertaken up-dates of their lists. At the same time, they have admitted new members. These changes and this growth in numbers slowly seem to change the nature of these export control regimes. Already for some time, a need has been felt for more in-depth and “out-of-the-box” reflection about the nature and evolution of these regimes and their relationship to the NPT. Questions have been asked like: How can the export control regimes continue to strengthen non-proliferation efforts in the changing commercial and political environment? What are the benefits and risks of enlargement of the export control regimes? What is the assessment of the situation not only by those States within the regimes, but also by those that are still outside? These are questions that still need to be addressed in an open-minded manner. We are ready to look for and seize opportunities for such discussion.

Mr. Chairman,

The non-power applications of nuclear energy make an important contribution to achieving our development goals. At the same time, we have to succeed in managing the risks related to the use of nuclear energy. Pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, non-proliferation and security efforts have to continue and be strengthened. Austria will continue making its contribution, also through the EU and the IAEA. We are also ready to continue supporting initiatives to implement UN Security Council resolution 1540.

Thank you Mr Chairman.