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

Mr. Chairman. The three pillars of the NPT, namely disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear technology, stand for peace, security and trust. Aggressive actions taken by the Russian armed forces against Ukraine have jeopardized all of those three virtues in the Euro-Atlantic region. Exercising use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine, the Russian Federation has clearly violated, among other international agreements and norms, the Budapest memorandum. We surely think that the strategic decision by the Ukrainian Government 20 years ago, to join the NPT as a non-nuclear state in favour of security assurances, was the right one. However we sincerely hope that violating the Budapest memorandum does not turn out as an alarming lesson for those who are yet to become members of the NPT. We call upon Russia to honour international legal norms, its international commitments and take immediate and concrete steps in implementing the Geneva accords from 17 April 2014.

We have followed very carefully the evolution of the paradigm of catastrophic humanitarian consequences from the use of nuclear weapons and we have participated in conferences that took place in Norway and Mexico treating this very issue. Estonia subscribes to the views of the working paper “Building Blocks for a World without Nuclear Weapons” submitted by a group of 20 states, including Estonia, to the NPT Preparatory Committee. We do share the concern of diverse nuclear risks and their serious impact on humanity, but achieving a goal of a world free of nuclear weapons requires a building block approach while implementing the 2010 NPT Action Plan. Furthermore we believe that the strategic context of nuclear disarmament should also be taken account. We remain sceptical about initiating parallel processes that do not involve states possessing nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless we fully understand the frustration of the international community about the lack of progress in taking forward the multilateral disarmament agenda. The Conference on
Disarmament (CD) has become a synonym for the words like ‘impasse’ or ‘deadlock’ and we keep repeating that another year is going by with the CD unable to start negotiations or even agree on a program for its work. At the same time, there are number of countries who want to join the CD and to contribute to achieving disarmament goals making it a more universally represented body. The Rules of Procedures of the CD stipulates that “the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals”. We call the members of the CD to appoint a Special Coordinator on enlargement.

The successful conclusion of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) demonstrates that success in the field of multilateral arms control is possible. The universalisation of the treaties remains another priority. We urge all states, particularly those whose adherence is required for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to enter into force, to sign and ratify the treaty without further delay.

International treaties and agreements serve us well only when they are fully and effectively implemented and transfers of sensitive, WMD enabling goods and technologies are controlled. This is why we, once again, highlight the importance of export controls. We would like to recognize the importance of the work that the Nuclear Suppliers Group has done in the area of effective export controls in nuclear trade and encourage all states to make use of multilaterally agreed guidelines and principles in developing their own national export controls.

As for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, we highly value the technical cooperation programme of the IAEA. Over the years Estonia has contributed to the Technical Cooperation Fund as well as benefitted from different TC projects. The cooperation is of great importance in the improvement of regulatory infrastructure, medical applications and radioactive waste management in Estonia. Through fruitful technical cooperation with the Agency we have gained valuable knowledge that we are willing and ready to share with other IAEA member states.

Mr. Chairman, as this is the last session of the Preparatory Committee before the next NPT review cycle starts, we hope that constructive spirit will help you guide this very important meeting to a successful conclusion and we are able to find compromises on all practical arrangements for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.