Mr Chairperson,

Finland aligns itself fully with the Cluster 3 statement by the European Union. I also refer to the statement given by Australia in the General Debate on behalf of the Vienna Group of Ten, which contained remarks very relevant to today’s discussion.
I would like to add a couple of comments from our national perspective.

Finland strongly supports the view that all Parties to the Nuclear Non-Prosiferation Treaty should work and cooperate towards promoting a responsible development and peaceful uses of nuclear energy while ensuring that the related technologies and goods are not disseminated for other than peaceful purposes. There is a balance of rights and responsibilities of all Parties to the Treaty regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Finland has included nuclear power as a major component in its energy mix and is fully committed to its international obligations and participates in further developing international standards to ensure safety of nuclear energy.

Finland recognizes the importance of the IAEA Technical Co-operation Programme for the transfer of know-how and expertise in nuclear field. Finland has always paid its share in full and on time to the Technical Co-operation Fund and will continue to do so.

**Safeguards**

I would like to underline that the IAEA’s system of safeguards plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. Safeguards and verification are necessary prerequisites for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with the Additional Protocol, should be accepted universally as the international verification standard.

Finland attaches great importance to the Agency’s safeguards work and is a consistent supporter of the IAEA safeguards, also in terms of extra budgetary support. Since the establishment of the Finnish Support Program to the IAEA Safeguards in 1988 we have offered considerable financial and in-kind support to the Agency. In line with our continued commitment we decided earlier this year to provide a financial contribution of 300 000 euro for the implementation of the IAEA’s monitoring and verification activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran in relation to the Joint Plan of Action.

Our national experience of implementation of the Integrated Safeguards has been very positive, and we support further development of the Agency’s safeguards system based on the state-level concept.

**Finnish nuclear power programme**

Finland is a small country but very dependent on energy. Nuclear power represents a major component in the energy mix, almost 30 percent share of the electricity production. Nuclear power plants have been in operation since late-1970s. The safety record is good and the performance indicators have been excellent.

At present, Finland’s fifth nuclear power plant unit is under construction and once completed, the share of nuclear power will increase up to 40 percent of the electricity production. In addition, political decisions on the construction of two new nuclear power plant units were made by the government and endorsed by the parliament in 2010. Through these decisions Finland will not only ensure the nation’s self-sufficiency in electricity production for the first time in several decades, but will also take an important step towards carbon emission-free energy.

**Nuclear waste management**

Nuclear waste management is an issue that should be considered from the very beginning of the development of nuclear power programme. A strategy on how to safely and securely dispose of spent nuclear fuel and nuclear and other radioactive waste is necessary right from the start.

Finland is currently licensing a final underground repository for spent fuel, called “Onkalo”, that will meet strict and appropriate safety, security and safeguards requirements and that will also make use of advanced technology. Large part of the new technology has been developed in Finland. The excavation work has been done to the final depth of the repository, more than 400 meters below the surface. The encapsulation and final disposal process of spent fuel is scheduled to start in 2020.

**Safety**
We attach great importance to the improvement of nuclear safety and Finland has consistently supported the Agency’s activities in this area. We should utilize the momentum of improving nuclear safety after the Fukushima accident. The IAEA and Member States should look at ways to ensure that nuclear safety would be continuously improved also in other areas than those highlighted by the lessons learned from the Fukushima accident.

It is essential that countries using nuclear power, or embarking on nuclear power, have sound legislative and regulatory framework on nuclear and radiation safety, and responsibilities of various stakeholders need to be clear. The regulatory bodies need to be given required authority and independence in their decision making, as well as resources to fulfil their tasks. The regulatory authority must also enjoy the trust of the citizens.

Finland has made full use of safety related advisory services and peer review missions. We are very pleased with these missions and we strongly encourage other states to make full use of the IAEA services.

Security

The security of nuclear materials and facilities is also given high priority in my country and Finland is strongly committed to strengthening nuclear security world-wide. National nuclear security systems will not reach their full potential without cooperation on international level. A good start would be to strengthen our common normative basis through the two existing international legal instruments. Finland promotes wider ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and bringing into force the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Finland has ratified the Amendment and encourages all States parties to do so.

My government continues to provide financial and in-kind support to the Agency’s Nuclear Security activities. In addition to the collective EU contribution, Finland is a longstanding contributor to the Nuclear Security Fund (NSF).

We should all make better use of the IAEA peer reviews of national nuclear security systems (IPPAS) and of existing nuclear security guidance, as well as commit to follow-up the findings of the missions. The NPT was established to counter the threat of nuclear proliferation to new states. It has of course become clear that we need to do more than just control state actors. Nuclear weapons in the hands of a terrorist groups or another non-state actor is deemed to be a major risk and subject to increasing international attention at least from 9/11 attack twelve years ago. The dangers related to Nuclear Terrorism have received increasing attention in the work of the IAEA and a number of activities are devoted to this subject.

One of the most important directives in combating nuclear terrorism is the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass-Destruction in particular to non-state actors. The resolution imposes binding obligations on all States to adopt non-proliferation legislation and to establish appropriate domestic controls.

Finland will be pleased to contribute to the high-level Security Council Open Debate on May 7th that will be arranged to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Resolution 1540. We are grateful to the Republic of Korea for hosting the event.

The international cooperation to reduce nuclear threats knows also initiatives that are not part of the permanent and universal institutional structure in the nuclear field but that contribute to the same goals.

One of them is the Nuclear Security Summit series. We express heartfelt thanks to the Government of the Netherlands for hosting the latest Summit in The Hague in March this year. In recent years further
progress has been made in securing nuclear materials, in strengthening national systems and in enhancing international cooperation. This is largely due to the political will mobilised through the three Nuclear Security Summits. Threat of nuclear terrorism and the need to address it through international cooperation has been in the focus of the Nuclear Security Summit series from the very beginning.

**GICNT Plenary in Helsinki 2015**

Finland also takes part in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and has agreed to host its plenary meeting in Helsinki in June 2015. The previous Plenary was hosted by the Government of Mexico last year.

This global initiative supports the efforts of permanent international institutions. The United Nations, IAEA and Interpol participate actively in the GICNT as official observers.

The priorities of the GICNT include activities in Nuclear Detection, Nuclear Forensics and Response and Mitigation Working. Our own national experience shows that sharing best practices and participating in exercises in the GICNT framework is useful and in our interest.

Currently 85 Partner Nations are involved in the GICNT cooperation. We very warmly welcome to Helsinki also those States who have not yet joined the Initiative. The Finnish Government is ready to work closely with all of you to make the GICNT meeting a productive one.

**Architecture of international cooperation in reducing nuclear threats**

To conclude, let me make a general remark on what is our approach towards such initiatives that are not part of the permanent and universal institutional structure in the nuclear field but that contribute to the same goals.

Finland is a staunch supporter of permanent, multilateral and, where possible, universal institutions in the business of global governance. This is the best way to ensure continuity and democratic decision making where everybody gets his or her voice heard. Broad based multilateralism is always our preference. We want universal rules and mechanisms, connected to the UN system whenever possible. At the same time we realise that other kinds of methods than universal mechanisms can be used to promote universal aspirations.

Initiatives like the Nuclear Security Summits and the GICNT should be seen as additional opportunities to champion the goal of international security. Selective and ad hoc processes cannot replace universal institutions and treaties but they are now and then called for to complement the work done in the multilateral system.

I want to add, that in the course of time many of these activities will become part of established and regular cooperation and will be channeled to the framework of international institutions.

The next Nuclear Security Summit in Washington 2016 will most probably be the last one of this Summit series. The unanimous view in The Hague Summit seemed to be that the IAEA will have a key role in the follow-up and in making irreversible the progress that has been achieved in the NSS-process.

I thank you.