Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on assumption of the chairmanship of the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. I want to assure my delegation’s full support to you in your demanding task.

Finland fully associates herself with statement delivered by the European Union. Let me make some additional remarks on behalf of the Government of Finland.

Besides the working papers provided by the European Union, our priorities are also reflected in the working paper prepared by the Vienna Group of 10. Finland is pleased to work again with these and other countries for a successful review of the NPT.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of international non-proliferation regime and a key component in the rules-based international security architecture. For Finland the three pillars of the Treaty – non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – are important and interrelated.

As long as nuclear weapons exist there is a risk of a catastrophe of immeasurable human and humanitarian cost. Nuclear weapons can and must be eliminated. This is our common goal, enshrined in the very Treaty we are now reviewing.

We need unified and inclusive approach in this effort. Nuclear disarmament will only take place if countries possessing these weapons are involved – whether parties to the NPT or not.

We recognize that nuclear disarmament is a gradual process. We call on all nuclear weapon states to take concrete action in nuclear disarmament during this review cycle. Increased transparency, enhanced verification, de-alerting, negative security assurances and a no first use policy are among the first steps to alleviate the threat posed by nuclear weapons, paving the way to nuclear disarmament.
Let me also draw your attention to the fact that non-strategic nuclear weapons are not covered by any legally binding verifiable international arrangement. Yet all nuclear weapons states possess these weapons and the threshold for their use is considered to be lower than for strategic nuclear weapons. It is high time that this normative gap for non-strategic nuclear weapons is addressed during this review cycle.

Finland has commissioned a UNIDIR study for arms control possibilities concerning non-strategic nuclear weapons. We will develop the thoughts presented in the study further and present balanced and concrete ideas for increased transparency and confidence building in this respect during the review cycle.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a priority, even though the de facto moratorium on nuclear weapon tests is nearly universal, with the unacceptable exception of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. We condemn nuclear and missile tests by the DPRK and call upon the DPRK to end immediately its illegal nuclear and missile programs and to adhere to universally accepted international norms and UNSC resolutions.

A Treaty Concerning Fissile Material should be negotiated in the first instance. We are encouraged by the establishment of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group and support efforts to launch negotiations towards a Treaty covering production and stockpiling of fissile material.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear weapon proliferation continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. In this respect we remind about the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council for the maintenance of International peace and security.

All states bound to nuclear non-proliferation under the NPT should adhere to this obligation by adopting and implementing the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement together with the Additional Protocol. These constitute the current nuclear non-proliferation verification standard and we call for their universalisation without delay.

Finland reiterates her full support for the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, including in the Middle East. The States of the Middle East, supported by the international community, the UN Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution, engaged actively before the previous Review Conference in a dialogue on the preparations for a conference on the Zone with the participation of all States of the Middle East. We would like to see such an engagement to continue.

We are encouraged by the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The JCPOA is a major multilateral achievement endorsed by the UN Security Council. We call on all parties to the JCPOA to implement it in full.

It is crucial that all states work and act together to eliminate the threat of nuclear terrorism. Finland has consistently supported implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1540, complemented by Resolution 2325. Finland hosted a plenary meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) in 2015 and has now presented a candidate to serve as the policy coordinator for the Initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

Finland was the first country to agree on a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA and Finland has produced nuclear energy safely and reliably for almost 40 years. Today, one third of Finland’s electricity is produced by nuclear power. Finnish companies operate four reactors and are in process of building two additional reactors in Finland.

Finland attaches great importance to nuclear safety. We have consistently supported the IAEA’s activities in this area. It is essential that countries using nuclear power, or embarking on for use of nuclear power, have a sound legislative and regulatory framework on nuclear and radiation safety.
The NPT constitutes the global framework for reliable cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In order to ensure peaceful use of nuclear technology worldwide, the basic requirement is that IAEA safety standards and security guidance are applied to technical cooperation involving nuclear and/or radiological material.

Each country is free to decide whether or not to include nuclear power as part of its own energy mix. If one decides for nuclear power, it must be used safely and securely. Responsible use of nuclear energy includes effective control of the fuel cycle and a nuclear waste management strategy. These are the key components in Finland’s international cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are highlighting the possibilities and the parameters of our international cooperation in a side-event on May 8, which we organise in cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia and the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

Let us embark on this review process leading to the 2020 Review Conference with a constructive approach with the aim of addressing and solving the challenges ahead of us. It is our common duty and responsibility to make this review a success and a building block for a more prosperous and peaceful world.