Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election as the Chairman of this important meeting. I also assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. I am confident that under your able leadership this session of the Preparatory Committee will succeed.

I wish also to associate my delegation with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Chairman,

At the start of the current NPT review process, the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to reiterate, once again, the importance of this Treaty and the dire need for the full implementation of all its provisions and the complete realization of its goals and purposes.

The coincidence of the 2020 Review Conference with the 50th anniversary of the Treaty will provide an important opportunity to review its implementation, assess the realization of its purposes, evaluate the implementation of the decisions and commitments made in its Review Conferences, identify impediments in the way of its full implementation and finally decide how to overcome these impediments.

Reviewing the challenges before the full implementation of the NPT in the past 47 years, I would like to highlight the relative success of the Treaty in preventing the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, Iran underscores that this relative success is achieved ONLY through the full compliance of the non-nuclear-weapon-States parties to the NPT with their non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty. Therefore, this is their success in acting responsibly, in keeping their promises, and in fulfilling their treaty obligations in good faith. As a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty, Iran highly values this success.

Nevertheless, the primary failure of the NPT and the main challenge before its full implementation is the non-compliance of the nuclear-weapon States with their nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty and their failure in fulfilling their respective commitments undertaken within its Review
Conferences, in particular in 1995, 2000 and 2010. Given the fact that the negotiating history and the text and context of the Treaty as well as the content of the outcome documents of its Review Conferences refer to the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world as the most important incentive of the States negotiating the Treaty, this is an extremely important issue that requires our special attention.

Non-nuclear-weapon States ratified the Treaty on the understanding that its implementation would and should lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Definitely, they never intended to become party to a Treaty that divides the world forever into nuclear-weapon-haves and have-nots. Nor did they ever intend to be part of a Treaty that fails to put an end to the possession of such inhumane weapons by a few.

My delegation wishes to reiterate once again that the purpose of the Treaty is not only to prevent non-nuclear-weapon States from acquiring nuclear weapons, it is equally or even more importantly about an inherently linked objective to this goal, that is disarming nuclear-weapon States. Accordingly, any assumption that nuclear weapons are legitimately possessed by a few or the indefinite extension of the Treaty implies the indefinite possession of such weapons by a few is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Treaty. Similarly, in our view, the reduction of nuclear weapons could never account for the implementation of explicit obligations under Article VI of the Treaty.

Article VI requires “each of the Parties to pursue negotiations in good faith...to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” The implementation of Article VI obligations is neither optional nor is it conditional on anything, including such so-called concepts as “strategic stability” or “international security environment”. It is a legal obligation. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996 unanimously decided that “There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”.

My delegation warns that the persistent lack of progress on nuclear disarmament as well as on issues such as vertical proliferation, including modernization of nukes and development of mini-nukes would certainly deepen the already existing frustration of non-nuclear-weapon States parties and challenge the very survival, relevance and integrity of the Treaty.

Reiterating our full support for negotiating a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction, we would like to stress that the ongoing “United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination” should be considered a collective protest
by a large number of non-nuclear-weapon States Parties that are frustrated from 47-year non-compliance of nuclear-weapon States with their nuclear disarmament obligations.

We hope that this situation would compel nuclear-weapon States to come to conclusion that they cannot remain consistently inconsistent with their nuclear disarmament obligations. This, indeed, is an alarming situation, and cannot continue indefinitely.

Taking into account the high importance of the long-delayed implementation of nuclear disarmament obligation for a large number of States parties, the 2020 Review Conference should consider this issue as its highest priority. In any case, the end result should be a legally binding and time-bound action plan, as it was suggested by NAM, ensuring transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide.

Mr. Chairman,

While the increase in the number of States parties to the Treaty is of course a great achievement, failure in gaining its universality remains a serious challenge to its effectiveness. As “zero” is “the only safe number of nuclear weapons on the planet”, indeed, “zero is the only acceptable number of countries outside the Treaty”.

My delegation highlights the importance of the universalization of the Treaty in achieving its objectives, in particular in such a volatile region as the Middle East, where nuclear weapons and unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and activities of the Israeli regime continue to threaten the peace and security of the region and beyond. This approach was acknowledged by the 2000 Review Conference when it reaffirmed “the importance of Israel’s accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East.” An approach that was also reaffirmed by the 2010 Review Conference. The 2020 Review Conference should consider this issue on a priority basis.

Expressing deepest concern over the persistent failures in implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East over the past 22 years, in particular the inability of the 2015 Review Conference in adopting its final document because of the objection to section on the Middle East by certain States parties, Iran would like to emphasize the importance of this resolution as an essential and integral element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and a basis upon which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995. Iran strongly believes that, as reaffirmed by successive Review Conferences of the Treaty, the resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved.
As the initiator of the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in 1974, Iran stresses that the only practical way for the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the establishment of such a zone is to exert and maintain, by the international community of States, a sustained pressure on the Israeli regime, to compel it to accede, promptly and unconditionally as a non-nuclear weapon party, to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to place all of its nuclear activities and installations under the IAEA full-scope safeguards.

Mr. Chairman,

On the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, no one can deny the large increase in the use of nuclear energy worldwide. However, we do not share the assumption that this is only due to the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Treaty. In this regard, and stressing the important role played by the IAEA in supporting the use of nuclear energy by developing countries, we draw attentions to the limitations posed by many developed countries, under the so-called export control regimes, on the transfer of nuclear know-how, technology, equipment and material to developing States parties, in full contradiction with the provisions of the Treaty. Such restrictions violate the inalienable rights of developing States parties and hamper their economic or technological development and, therefore, have to come to an end.

Taking into account the importance of the full realization of the inherent right of States parties under Article IV, we urge the 2020 Review Conference to examine this issue and take concrete decisions to ensure the full and non-discriminatory implementation of the Treaty in regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

As it has been clarified in the course of JCPOA negotiations and afterward, Iran’s nuclear programme has been peaceful activities by a state party to the NPT under article IV of the Treaty and it has never been a proliferation challenge whatsoever. So, the manufactured crisis in this regard was over when all parties showed their will to end it up. From now on all parties must remain committed to their undertakings under the deal, as Iran has done so. Since a confusing reference on JCPOA and Resolution 2231 made in a statement, I feel obliged to clarify that these documents have nothing to do with the prompt ratification of additional protocol by Iran and Iranian missile testing that is completely a legitimate defensive conventional exercise.

In conclusion, my delegation stands ready to cooperate with you, Mr. Chairman, and all interested delegations to enable this review cycle of the Treaty to adopt concrete decisions for the full implementation of all its provisions and the complete realization of its objectives, in particular nuclear disarmament that remains as our highest priority.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.