Mr. Chairman,

I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chair and to assure you of my delegation's full support.

This meeting provides States Parties with an opportunity to take stock of existing challenges, reflect on progress made, and set a course for 2020. In surveying the current dynamics of the global disarmament and non-proliferation machinery, it is apparent that there are a number of difficult issues that the international community needs to address.

While these challenges may seem daunting, multiple successful Conferences have demonstrated that the NPT review cycle can identify common ground and make progress on even the most divisive issues. It is imperative that States Parties use this session to continue to pursue and create opportunities for constructive engagement and to build consensus.

Canada was disappointed that we were unable to join consensus at the 2015 RevCon on a final outcome document. This was not an easy decision, but one taken as a matter of principle. While we maintain these principles, we are also prepared to build on lessons-learned from previous review cycles, and to engage in discussions with full commitment to a productive outcome in 2020.

Canada continues to advocate a practical, step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament, placing priority on concrete measures which are possible to advance in the current international security environment. A key example is our pursuit of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Canada is pleased to be chairing a High-level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group, aimed at building on the work of the 2014-2015 Group of Governmental Experts, with a view to developing substantive recommendations for eventual treaty negotiations. We believe that establishing a verifiable ban on fissile material production would help limit nuclear arsenals and move closer to our common goal of nuclear disarmament.

Canada continues to advocate for the entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and we call upon the eight remaining countries listed in Annex II to ratify it without further delay. While the international community has established a de facto norm against nuclear test-explorations, and voluntary moratoria remain in place as an essential interim measure, these achievements are no substitute for the entry-into-force of the Treaty. North Korea’s destabilizing and provocative nuclear tests are a reminder that CTBT entry-into-force remains as relevant and urgent today as it has ever been.

Canada reiterates its view that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement together with an Additional Protocol constitutes the current safeguards standard required under Article III of the Treaty. With this standard in place, the IAEA can draw annual conclusions regarding the non-diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities and the absence of
undeclared nuclear material and activities among States Parties. Canada continues to urge States, which have yet to bring into force a CSA and an Additional Protocol, to do so as soon as possible. Pursuant to Article III, Canada also calls on all States to implement effective export controls to prevent diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Canada is actively contributing to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and continues to view this as an indispensable tenet of the NPT’s three-part bargain. Canada fully supports the legitimate right of all States Parties to full access to nuclear material, equipment and technological information for peaceful purposes. However, the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy comes with a clear responsibility of States parties to fulfill their nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation obligations.

For Canada and its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), the 2010 Action Plan remains critical for guiding progress across all three pillars of the NPT. We urge all States Parties to accelerate efforts to implement the Action Plan in its entirety. Tangible efforts by NPT states, particularly the Nuclear Weapon States, to address their disarmament commitments through the framework of the Action Plan will be essential for building confidence in the current review cycle, and for ensuring the future health of the NPT regime. Similarly, the extent of NPT state compliance with our non-proliferation obligations, and our collective response to non-compliance will determine the credibility of Treaty, now and in the future.

Canada appreciates the efforts of the European Union and the Permanent five members of the UN Security Council plus Germany in successfully concluding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action two years ago. The JCPOA established a framework to build international confidence that Iran’s nuclear program will be exclusively civilian. Full and faithful implementation of the agreement will be required in order to maintain this confidence moving forward. We welcome successful implementation of the Agreement to date and commend the IAEA for its ongoing efforts to monitor and verify Iran’s implementation of its JCPOA commitments. We note that the IAEA will need significant extra-budgetary contributions for many years to come in order to continue its vital verification role. We thank those states that have already supported the IAEA in this regard and call on all States Party to consider making additional contributions.

Canada remains deeply concerned by the intolerable proliferation activities of North Korea – a country which continues to enhance its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs in violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, and at the expense of the well-being of its people. The case of North Korea is one of the clearest reminders of the importance of strengthening the non-proliferation regime, and of the dangers of allowing nuclear materials and technology to be diverted for military purposes. North Korea’s belligerence and continued testing of both nuclear devices and ballistic missile technology significantly threatens regional and international peace and security. Strong and united international action, particularly from states in the Asia-Pacific, is needed to convince it to return to political dialogue on verifiable denuclearization. We continue to call on North Korea to fulfill its international non-proliferation obligations and resume its adherence to the NPT.

Canada also calls on Syria to return to full compliance with its NPT obligations.
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to close with some thoughts on the review cycle on which we are embarking. Though there have been many moments of genuine collaboration in the NPT’s history, regrettably, the review process has too often been characterized by zero-sum dynamics. This approach is fundamentally misguided, and runs counter to the central premise that the Treaty’s three pillars are mutually reinforcing. Progress in non-proliferation paves the way for disarmament, just as actions to reducing nuclear arsenals help strengthen the treaty’s overall framework. Further still, a strengthened NPT allows us to better support the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. In order to realize progress across all three of these areas, we will need to build bridges across the issues that divide us, and solidify consensus on areas where we can move forward. We recognize that this will require mutual flexibility and strengthened political will, and that we will all have to rise above repetitive and unproductive debates. Given the clear benefits to global peace and stability that derive from a strengthened NPT, such an effort is truly in the best interests of us all.

Thank you Mr. Chairman