Mr. Chairman,

Let me congratulate you on assuming the duties of the Chair of the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Lithuania stands ready to assist you in achieving a successful conclusion to this First Session. We express our gratitude for an all-encompassing and transparent manner in which you have steered the preparatory activities to ensure a comprehensive review cycle. Lithuanian position was fully reflected in the European Union statement - and we would like to highlight aspects of a particular importance in our national capacity.

Lithuania is committed to the NPT as the foundation of the global nuclear non-proliferation; the key substance for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the basis for further development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Treaty delivers real and tangible security dividends for all of us. Three communally reinforcing pillars of the Treaty are and should be continuously promoted in a balanced manner to enhance the Treaty’s credibility and integrity. It remains fundamental to uphold and preserve the NPT as a multilateral instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability. All obligations and commitments assumed under the Treaty or undertaken during previous Review Conferences must be duly implemented.

Now in its forty-seventh year, the fundamental bargain that fortifies the NPT is as resonant as it was in 1970: the pledge by non-nuclear weapon states not to acquire nuclear weapons; the commitment by nuclear weapon states to pursue disarmament; and access for all states parties to peaceful nuclear energy. We must reaffirm our unwavering commitment to these fundamental principles (.) and achieve outcomes that strengthen both non-proliferation and disarmament, and facilitate access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Lithuania reiterates its commitment to a universal NPT and calls upon those states that are not party to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible as non-nuclear weapon states and to do so without preconditions.

The goal of a world without nuclear weapons can only be achieved with concerted commitment to action by both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states:

Nuclear weapon states must commit themselves to this goal, exercise leadership, and chart the physical course to the nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we underline the necessity to progress in a steadfast manner towards the full implementation of Article VI of the NPT, particularly via overall decrease of the global stockpiles of nuclear weapons and seek continuous progressive reductions to both strategic and non-strategic arsenals of deployed and non-deployed nuclear weaponry. A continuous focus on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting is commendable and should be pursued continuously. In this light we reiterate the importance of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, an essential instrument to the international security and strategic stability that is only ensured by a full and verifiable compliance of its Parties;
Non-nuclear weapon states must comply with their Treaty obligations and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreements, and strive to reinforce the Treaty’s non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania remains committed to the progressive approach in seeking practical ways toward a tangible advance in nuclear disarmament. It is for this reason that we view the legal ban of nuclear weapon initiatives – in any legal shape and form – as both counterproductive to the international disarmament and security efforts, and inherently alarming. We are convinced that an endeavor to achieve such a treaty without the involvement of nuclear weapon states would only expand the schism and contribute to division in these vital international deliberations.

We support an operable protocol to nuclear disarmament via continuous practical systematic approach, taking into account both humanitarian and security considerations, within the existent framework of complementary treaties, institutions and commitments in support of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

Entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will be of a crucial importance to non-proliferation processes and constitute a fundamental step forward disarmament. Lithuania welcomes the reaffirmation of the importance of the CTBT through the UNSCR 2310 and urges states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT. We also urge all states to support the immediate initiation of the negotiation of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT).

Mr. Chairman,

The international community is confronted with the proliferation crises that pose a grave threat to the international peace, security and non-proliferation regime.

Highly destabilizing behavior on the part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the form of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, in violation and flagrant disregard of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, has greatly increased tension in the region and beyond. The DPRK claims to have withdrawn from the NPT. We call on the DPRK to resume international negotiations and return to full compliance with the NPT and its associated safeguards agreement, and to ratify the CTBT.

Lithuania is of a position that a comprehensive Safeguards Agreement combined with an Additional Protocol should be recognized as the basic standard of verification. In this regard, we echo a call upon Syria to resolve its non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement alongside outstanding issues in full cooperation with the IAEA and to adhere to the Additional Protocol.

We remain convinced the most productive way towards reinforced compliance lies in ensuring the IAEA is accredited with both instruments and authority to provide credible guarantees that a state party does not have any undeclared or covert facilities and that its nuclear programmes are peaceful.

Mr. Chairman,
Lithuania fully recognizes the value many states place on access to the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy. We support the right of state parties to participate in the development of peaceful nuclear energy, within a framework that reduces proliferation risk and adheres to the highest international safeguards standards.

We remain convinced that nuclear security cannot be upheld in isolation from nuclear safety; and both must be dealt with in a coordinated and consistent manner. Transparency, respect to the reasoned interests of the neighboring countries and international law, alongside advanced safety culture are of key importance in this regard. Lithuania values these principles highly and calls on all the countries with peaceful nuclear energy programs, especially those in close neighborhood to the Lithuanian capital and densely populated areas, to ensure that transparency, openness and strict adherence to the international nuclear safety standards constitute a universal norm. Unsafe development of nuclear energy cannot be tolerated, if it is to remain in the global energy mix in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania’s commitment to a successful Review Conference is reflected by the work we have undertaken in the lead up to this event. Together with the international community, we are seeking practical disarmament and non-proliferation measures, which we hope can help achieve consensus on steps to strengthen the Treaty. The Nuclear Security Summit process has highlighted the need to secure nuclear materials and prevent acts of nuclear terrorism and proliferation. Lithuania hopes the momentum achieved by the NSS can be sustained and accelerated. Final Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington in 2016 marked a tremendous advance in international efforts and an important achievement in strengthening nuclear security. We are delighted to have contributed to the process over the years. Lithuania will remain supportive of the NSS objectives and continuity in anticipation of a further, deeper, verifiable and irreversible decrease in all nuclear arsenals, as well as a continuing reduction of their role in national security strategies.

Mr. Chairman,

Beyond this initial Preparatory Committee session and the beginning of the quinquennial review period, enduring condition of the Treaty and its long-term contribution to our collective security will only be maintained by the state parties’ political will and real action (.) to meet all obligations and commitments under NPT.

The goal of a world without nuclear weapons is not ephemeral, nor can it be achieved overnight. We need to adopt a determined and methodical approach (.) to fulfil that goal. We owe a secure world to both present and forthcoming generations and cannot settle for anything less. Let us ensure this initial session of the review cycle makes its own contribution to that goal.

Thank you.