Mr Chairman,

Finland fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union heard earlier today in this debate. I will make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

Article VI of the NPT provides a permanent and universally recognized framework for pursuing nuclear disarmament. It brings together all States Parties in their common quest to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Reaching this objective requires practical, verifiable and irreversible steps by the nuclear-weapon states, whether parties to the NPT or not. Reaching that goal thus places on them a special responsibility. At the same time, all States Parties can and must contribute by effectively implementing their obligations under the NPT as a whole.

Everyone on the planet recognizes that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic consequences. Nuclear weapons are weapons but their destructive potential makes them unique, and therefore makes them a unique source of concern also for our citizens.

Verification is indispensable in any disarmament agreement. Verification is needed to instill confidence in that disarmament commitments will actually be fulfilled. Finland was one of the original sponsors of the UN resolution on nuclear disarmament verification put forward by Norway. We will participate actively in its follow-up. We see it as an initiative where nuclear-weapon states and those non-nuclear-weapon states are working together in partnership on an issue that is important to both.

Starting negotiations on a treaty capping production and stockpiling of fissile material continues to be a key priority for Finland. We welcome the establishment of the expert preparatory group. We expect it to make concrete and realistic recommendations on the way forward.
Non-strategic nuclear weapons are not covered by any legally binding, verifiable international arrangement. This is a normative gap that needs to be addressed. Finland has commissioned a UNIDIR study on how arms control could contribute to lessening the danger posed by these particular weapons. We will come up with concrete ideas of our own for more transparency and confidence building in this respect during the present NPT review cycle.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains another priority for Finland. While a de facto moratorium on nuclear weapon tests exists and is nearly universal, to endure the CTBT must be put on a permanent legal footing.

The exception to the near-universal rule remains of course the DPRK. Its conduct is increasingly irresponsible and poses an increasing threat to regional and international peace and security.

Finland condemns the nuclear and missile tests by the DPRK. We call upon the DPRK to end immediately its illegal and destabilizing nuclear and missile programs and to adhere to international norms and to comply with all the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. All the States Parties to the NPT must take a stand against the DPRK’s unacceptable conduct.

Mr. Chairman,

The present review cycle of the NPT provides all States Parties an opportunity to reaffirm their obligations under the Treaty, including their Article VI obligations, and to work together constructively to advance nuclear disarmament and all the goals of the Treaty in the interests of global security and stability. Let us now seize that opportunity.