Mr. Chair,

Let me express our appreciation for the way you guided our deliberations at PrepCom III. We look forward to work under your leadership to achieve a substantive outcome of this committee.

NPT is as much about disarmament as non-proliferation, with the overall objective to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. The Treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995, provided that the nuclear weapons states agreed on fundamental principles and objectives on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which were further elaborated in 2000 through the 13 steps. In this way, the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference furthermore strengthened the disarmament obligations.

In this respect it is particularly worth noting step 6 which says “An unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapons states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all states parties are committed under article VI”.

If this NPT Review Conference is to be successful, we would need to restore the compact from 1995 and 2000. To have an outcome that could make a real difference, it requires going beyond the obligations set 15 and 10 years ago. The past decade has confirmed that one of the

(Check against delivery)
weaknesses of the documents from 1995 and 2000 is the absence of timelines for the destruction of nuclear arsenals. Likewise, there are no deadlines for establishing a robust and credible disarmament and non-proliferation regime beyond early entry into force of the CTBT and conclusion of a FMCT within five years. None of these have been accomplished.

After 65 years with nuclear weapons and 40 years with NPT, we cannot claim that we are where we should be with nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. This is not good enough anymore. We must establish a new international nuclear agenda with an action plan for nuclear disarmament with clear benchmarks and deadlines holding us all accountable.

To achieve the objective of a world without nuclear weapons, this Review Conference must reconfirm our determination to take practical steps to this end. Furthermore, this conference must agree on a concrete programme of work covering all three pillars of the NPT that is to be implemented in the Review Cycle up to 2015.

Regarding the obligations of continued and substantial reductions in nuclear arsenals, Norway welcomes the conclusion of the new START agreement as well as unilateral reductions. Yet, after 40 years of the NPT it is now time that the process of reducing the existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons must be accelerated significantly towards zero nuclear weapons.

We therefore call for continued rounds of arms reductions talks between the United States and the Russian Federation, which should cover all categories of nuclear weapons, including the so-called tactical nuclear weapons. Norway has joined a number of initiatives to bring this category of nuclear weapons into the general nuclear arms control and disarmament processes. The objective is full elimination of tactical nuclear weapons.

All nuclear weapons states must be brought into the nuclear disarmament process. While recognising that the US and Russia have taken a lead since they possess more than 90 per cent of current nuclear arsenals, the disarmament commitment certainly applies to all nuclear weapons states.
Irreversibility, transparency and verifiability are fundamental principles for nuclear disarmament. We welcome the new US transparency measures and encourage other nuclear weapons states to follow suit.

Verification is important to build the necessary confidence that nuclear disarmament is actually taking place. Such verification should not be the domain of only the nuclear weapons states. Non-nuclear weapons states must be part of this process, in conformity with their obligations of the NPT. That is why the United Kingdom and Norway have worked closely together to identify modalities for credible verification carried out by inspectors not only from the nuclear weapons states themselves. The non-governmental organisation VERTIC has participated as an independent observer. A working paper has been circulated on this project, and there will be an open-ended information meeting this week, on Thursday, 13 May.

The process to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons would imply that nuclear weapon states should refrain from developing new categories of nuclear arms. Nuclear weapons are a legacy of the past and should be seen as irrelevant and counterproductive in future security policies. We do not need a new nuclear arms race.

That is why it is imperative to secure an early entry into force of the CTBT. Norway welcomes Indonesia’s ratification of this treaty. Likewise, we are pleased that the US administration intends to seek ratification in the US Senate. The CTBT serves both our non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

For more than 14 years negotiations and conclusion of the FMCT has been considered the next step of the multilateral nuclear disarmament process. Due to the impasse in the CD we have been denied the opportunity to move forward. This is not sustainable, and suggests that we have to address the relevance of the CD as a disarmament forum.

A fissile material treaty should also address the issue of existing stocks. While moving towards zero we must deal with the large military stocks in nuclear weapons states. It should be recalled that the implementation of the US, Russian and IAEA Trilateral Initiative was part of the 13 steps.
Pending full elimination of nuclear weapons, we should advance practical measures to reduce their role in security policies. It is highly encouraging that there seem to be a new momentum on further strengthening negative security assurances, which my delegation has addressed in a separate statement in the subsidiary body.

A practical way of demonstrating a diminished role of nuclear weapons is to lower their operational status. There has been progress in recent years, as we also heard in the US statement yesterday, but more could be done in the field of de-alerting. Norway has in previous years supported a resolution in the UN General Assembly calling for additional steps in this direction. De-alerting is also essential to avoid accidental launches and not least to provide decision makers more time in a crisis situation. The question of the operational status of deployed nuclear weapons cannot be seen as only a matter which is to be addressed by nuclear weapons states themselves. We all have a stake in this matter.

Mr. Chair,

The atmosphere at this Review Conference is constructive. One should expect that this Conference can produce a forward-looking outcome. We should make active use of a wealth of proposals on how to move toward our overall objective of abolishing all nuclear weapons, as also proposed by the UN Secretary General and a host of member states.

A world without nuclear weapons cannot continue to be just a vision. It is an objective which we, states parties to the NPT, are committed to achieve. As the ultimate implementation of Article VI, a nuclear weapons free world will need an additional legal instrument. This is a topic which is becoming increasingly relevant and important. We are likely to see more discussions on this matter in the time to come.

To this end, we should also look how nuclear weapons relate to International Humanitarian Law. Nuclear weapons are the most indiscriminate, disproportionate and inhumane weapons ever created. After 65 years experience of living with the threat of nuclear weapons, we have the necessary means and knowledge to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Now we have to, together, employ the necessary political will.