Mr Chairman

I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of the members of the Vienna Group of Ten: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden.

At the outset let me congratulate your election as Chairman of Main Committee III and assure you of our full support.

Mr Chairman

The NPT plays a unique role in providing a framework that fosters international confidence and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is worth recalling here, as we did in our plenary statement, that
nuclear applications play an essential role in areas such as human health, water management, agriculture, food safety and nutrition, energy and environmental protection.

We therefore consider this Committee's work critical to a successful outcome at this Review Conference. The Vienna Group affirms the right of all Parties to the Treaty to undertake research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and in conformity with Articles I, II and III of the Treaty. With that right comes the responsibility to ensure that nuclear activities are carried out in the best possible non-proliferation, safety and security conditions.

With such challenges in mind, the Group has prepared a comprehensive paper, which has been circulated as conference working paper 1, with a view to encouraging discussion and substantive progress on the so-called 'Vienna Issues'. Of direct relevance to the Committee's work are the sections containing recommendations on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, nuclear safety and security as well as withdrawal from the NPT. Each section proposes specific draft review language, which has been carefully crafted, mindful of other States party's positions, in order to facilitate consensus on key issues. These recommendations are supported by brief and concise background notes.

The Vienna Group of 10 represents a wide range of perspectives on nuclear themes. Hence, in order to reach consensus, substantive negotiations and compromises were needed. We hope our recommendations and supporting background notes may be helpful as this Committee will probably go through a similar negotiation process.
The members of the Vienna Group, acting in their national capacities, look forward to working with other delegations in a constructive and positive spirit in this Committee, and in the conference more broadly, over the coming weeks.

Thank you Mr Chairman.