On behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, I would like to express our gratitude to Austria for hosting this event, which allows us once again to explore the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to state clearly that advancing nuclear disarmament is a collective responsibility. It is of utmost importance for the on-going discussions to be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible, which will be yet another stimulus for building upon a common understanding for necessary concrete practical steps. In this context, I use this opportunity to welcome the participation of nuclear weapon states as well as civil society representatives. We see a window of opportunity here, in Vienna, to carefully consider all views on the topic.

Bulgaria shares the concern in regard to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could occur as a result of possible use of nuclear weapons or incidents with such devices. At this moment states lack capacity for effective reaction in case of a nuclear incident or use of nuclear weapons due to the indiscriminate effect of these types of weapons. Raising awareness of the humanitarian impact is key in understanding why we should strive to reach the ultimate goal - a world free of nuclear weapons. This is only possible through constructive engagement with those states that are in possession of nuclear weapons. Both the security and humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons should be addressed in order to achieve significant progress in this respect. All states should more resolutely fulfill their disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. We need to build a common ground for effective progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly through the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We would like to encourage constructive and realistic approach which requires, inter alia, agreeing on effective and implementable measures that will strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, such as unblocking the Conference on Disarmament and adapting its membership to the realities, bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, starting negotiations on Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. Effective nuclear disarmament requires mutually reinforcing and simultaneous multilateral, bilateral or unilateral measures, while taking into account the existing security concerns.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my country’s commitment to the nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.