Mr. President:

On behalf of the Cuban delegation, I would like to thank Austria for the excellent organization of this conference.

We have listened carefully to the presentations of the panelists, who have demonstrated, once again, the serious threat to the survival of humanity and life on our planet represents the existence of nuclear weapons.

The use of a fraction of the more than 16,000 existing nuclear weapons would have catastrophic consequences for our planet. No country would be immune to the folly of a nuclear attack.

The only way to ensure that mankind will not suffer anymore the terrible impact of these weapons is their total prohibition and elimination. Cuba maintains that the use of nuclear weapons is illegal, immoral and cannot be justified under any security doctrine.

The colossal military spending is now devoted to the maintenance and modernization of nuclear arsenals, should be used for the benefit of mankind, to promote the development of countries and eradicate poverty.

Why do not schools are built instead of nuclear submarines and hospitals instead of "smart" bombs? Why not vaccines are produced instead of nuclear warheads and more food instead of more bombers? Why instead of making missile shields, no investigations are driven to fight AIDS and cancer?

We are not starting from scratch. The UN General Assembly took an important step last year when it decided to establish the September 26 as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, commemorated in 2014 for the first time.

In what constitutes a milestone, last January 29 on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana, Latin America and the Caribbean was formally proclaimed as a Peace Zone. The proclamation includes the firm commitment of the States of the region with the promotion of nuclear disarmament as a priority.
Mr. President:

Conferences held in Oslo and Nayarit and the one now taking place in Vienna, contributed to greater international understanding of the serious risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences associated with the existence of nuclear weapons. But this is not enough and cannot be the ultimate goal.

It is time to begin, without delay, a diplomatic process to negotiate a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons and providing their total elimination.

Practical actions should be immediately implemented in order to achieve the adoption of an International Convention on Nuclear Disarmament, not later than in 2018.

To achieve this goal, we propose to establish in 2015 by UNGA resolution, an Open-ended Working Group of the UN General Assembly, with the mandate to negotiate and recommend a draft comprehensive convention prohibiting the possession, use or threat of use, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling and transfer of nuclear weapons and provide for their verified destruction, no later than in 20 years.

The Working Group would operate under the rules of procedure of the UN General Assembly.

The draft Convention negotiated and recommended by the Working Group would be presented for consideration and adoption, to the United Nations High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, which has been already convened for not later than 2018, under UNGA resolution 68/32.

The Cuban delegation has circulated to all participants a working document with a more detailed explanation of our proposal. Let me conclude by quoting the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, who in reference to the grave danger of nuclear weapons said: "People are on duty to demand that political leaders their right to live. When life of its species, its people and their loved ones are at such risk, no one can afford to be indifferent, nor can waste a minute in demanding respect for that right; tomorrow is too late".

Thank you very much.