I would like to start by thanking the Government of Austria for hosting this important conference. The convening of this conference represents a further milestone in the re-emerge of international concern about the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons.

At the last Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May 2010, all member states of the NPT expressed their – quote – "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" (end quote).

We are now approaching the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The conferences in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna have shown a serious concern with the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons shared by the vast majority of States.

In the course of these three conferences we have heard interventions from States that have never possessed nuclear weapons; States that possess nuclear weapons; States that formerly possessed nuclear weapons; States that have been affected by testing or use of nuclear weapons; and States that host nuclear weapons or otherwise participate in nuclear weapons-related activities. All have expressed a major concern that nuclear weapons represent a distinct humanitarian challenge - thereby underscoring that all States have a stake in this. This continued discussion since the Oslo conference is a welcome addition to other debates on nuclear weapons. We welcome the participation of the United States and the UK.

We are pleased that this discourse was again brought into the UN General Assembly’s First Committee during this year’s session, with the statement by New Zealand on behalf of 155 states. We welcome the increase by 30 states, and note with appreciation that all the Nordic countries joined the statement this year.

This conference in Vienna shows that support for this agenda is becoming stronger and participation in the discussion is broader. That is a natural consequence of the growing recognition that the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation and the risks associated with nuclear weapons, are a global concern.

Norway is and has been financing studies by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and the International Law and Policy Institute (ILPI). Their studies address the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, including the consequences of nuclear testing and the risks associated with nuclear weapons, but also the legal questions within the context of broader political debates about the status of nuclear weapons under international law. We trust that these studies will provide valuable input to this discourse. Furthermore, Norway is contributing to the UNDP Sponsorship Program, with a view to facilitate participation at this Conference.

The Oslo conference provided a platform for the first systematic discussion on what the humanitarian consequences are, and how to relate to them. This conference in Vienna and the
conference in Nayarit, have contributed to an even more comprehensive perspective on the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation.

We all share the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Listening to the experts, reaching that goal seems more urgent that ever before.

As a party to the NPT, Norway remains deeply committed to the goals of that treaty. We welcome initiatives that contribute to meaningful progress towards our common goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The humanitarian approach to disarmament and non-proliferation is a contribution to achieving progress within the NPT Review Conference.

The collective findings of the three conferences on the humanitarian consequences, the risks associated with nuclear weapons, as well as the legal aspects discussed here in Vienna, will provide - together with a strong momentum and sense of urgency - key input to the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

In closing, we would like to once again commend the Austrian government for hosting this conference and thank all the participating states, ICRC and the UN and civil society for their most valuable contributions.

Thank you.