Mr Chair,

I have the privilege to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and my own country, Norway.

Mr Chair,

Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Our message is clear: We call for continued global commitment to the treaty, and a willingness to rebuild trust after years of polarisation. This will require a concerted effort and clear political engagement on the part of both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapons states.

(Check against delivery)
We all have a responsibility to work hard to find common ground. We must focus on what unites us, rather than on what divides us. A case in point is the work on nuclear disarmament verification, and we welcome the fact that the UN Group of Governmental Experts has agreed on a consensus report.

The Nordic countries cooperate closely on disarmament and non-proliferation, despite our different relationships with the EU and NATO. History has taught us that sustainable security can only be achieved through close cooperation. In our efforts to uphold and strengthen the NPT, this is a lesson well worth remembering.

We therefore also welcome the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, and we join his call for all states to work together for a world without nuclear weapons.

Preparing for a successful 2020 NPT Review Conference is an overarching priority. The treaty has proved to be resilient and effective. Over the past five decades, the global stockpile of nuclear weapons has been substantially reduced, the proliferation of nuclear weapons has been curtailed, and the benefits of civilian applications of nuclear energy and technology have been shared globally. The NPT has been a resounding success. We have to make sure it will also be the case in the future.

Mr Chair,

The global security environment is becoming increasingly challenging. This heightens the need for international rules-based cooperation. We need to focus on our common interests to effectively pursue nuclear disarmament, and to close the remaining nuclear proliferation loopholes.

(Check against delivery)
We encourage the nuclear-weapons states to actively engage in arms control efforts, with the United States and Russia, possessing the largest arsenals, taking the lead by reviving a constructive dialogue.

We regret Russia’s non-compliance with the INF treaty and strongly encourage Russia to return to full compliance before the treaty is terminated in August. At the same time, we strongly encourage the US and Russia to extend the New START treaty and to seek further reciprocal reductions in strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed warheads.

We welcome the diplomatic dialogue between the US and the DPRK. The only sustainable solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula is political. The DPRK’s nuclear and missiles programmes violate a series of UN Security Council resolutions and pose a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Nuclear disarmament by the DPRK is essential.

The Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) is a landmark non-proliferation achievement, which was endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council through resolution 2231. Therefore, we regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, which has put the agreement into jeopardy. We urge the continued, full and effective implementation of the JCPOA and call on Iran to maintain its full cooperation with the IAEA. At the same time, Iran’s ballistic missile activity remains a significant concern.

Failure to address these challenges could seriously undermine the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime of which the NPT is the cornerstone.

Mr Chair,

The obligations under the NPT, and commitments made at review conferences, remain as valid as ever. We call for the implementation of all commitments, including those related to Article VI.

(Check against delivery)
A forward-looking agenda covering all three pillars of the NPT is needed for the 2020 Review Conference. This agenda should include the following points:

- Strengthening the global norm against nuclear testing by promoting the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.
- Developing an effectively verifiable treaty that bans the production of fissile material.
- Developing credible multilateral solutions to verify future nuclear disarmament.
- Pursuing measures to reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons.
- Strengthening confidence-building measures, including efforts to enhance transparency on the part of nuclear-weapon states.
- Strengthening negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states.
- Addressing the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons.
- Working towards universal acceptance of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol as the global safeguards standard.
- Making the most of peaceful applications of nuclear technologies in advancing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Promoting political support and practical capacity-building to ensure diverse and more equal participation in efforts to fully implement all pillars of the NPT.

Mr Chair,

For the past 50 years, the NPT has served the international community well. Yet for all its success, its future cannot be taken for granted.

Above all, NPT states parties must uphold the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Everything possible must be done to avert the risk of nuclear war and, in the words of the treaty itself, 'the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind' in the event of a calamity of this kind. We, the Nordic countries, reaffirm our commitment to doing our part.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

(Check against delivery)