Thank you, Mr. Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Mr. Chair,

Let me congratulate you on the assumption of the Chairmanship of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference and take this opportunity to thank you for your dedicated efforts to convene this session. Let me also assure you of the strongest support of our delegations.

Our common goal remains to preserve and strengthen the NPT as a cornerstone of global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. We reiterate our support to all three NPT pillars - nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy - as a fundamental international instrument for global peace, security, and stability.

Mr. Chair,

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia’s unprovoked, illegal and unjustified full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine that has already had many catastrophic consequences, including increased risks to nuclear safety and security. We are also gravely concerned about the illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power. Russia must immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

A year ago, Russia broke the emerging consensus for the NPT Review conference outcome document. In February this year, Russia announced the suspension of its participation in the New START Treaty, undermining global nuclear stability. On 25
May, defence ministers of Russia and Belarus signed documents defining the procedure for storing Russia’s "non-strategic nuclear weapons" in a special storage facility on the territory of Belarus.

With these listed actions Russia is proceeding with dismantling of legal framework for nuclear arms control and non-proliferation. The deployment of any kind of nuclear weapons in Belarus goes against Russia’s and Belarus’ international commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Budapest Memorandum. In particular, after blatantly violating the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances to Ukraine, Russia would also be in breach of the identical Memorandum with Belarus. The Budapest Memorandum committed Belarus to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory. It also committed Russia to respect a non-nuclear Belarus. This Russia’s action represents another provocation and further threatens global security.

Last year Russia signed up to the P5 joint statement reaffirming that, nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. This year Russia reaffirmed the same commitment in the joint statement with China, and further committed to reduce the risk of nuclear war and ease tensions. We therefore reiterate our call on Russia to reverse its decision and abide by all its commitments, return to full compliance with the New START and stop its irresponsible nuclear rhetoric.

Any kind of comparisons by Russia and Belarus of the deployment of nuclear weapons with NATO nuclear sharing are totally misleading. In this context, let us make it clear that the fundamental purpose of NATO’s nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. NATO’s nuclear arrangements pre-existed the entry into force of the NPT and thus have been agreed to by all NPT state parties, and they continue to be fully consistent and compliant with the NPT. NATO Allies act with full respect of their international commitments.

Mr. Chair,
We also call on China to demonstrate its responsibility as a permanent member of the UN Security Council by acting in full support of the United Nations Charter and international law in the context of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. We encourage China to exercise the transparency regarding its nuclear weapons and doctrine, to refrain from further build-up, and pursue risk reduction measures.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues the pursuit of its unlawful weapons systems, as demonstrated by the conduct of an unprecedented number of its ballistic missile test launches that included ICBMs, as well as its intention to prepare another nuclear test. We call on DPRK to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions and to abandon all its ballistic missile and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner, as well as to engage in a diplomatic process.

We also remain gravely concerned about Iran further drifting away from its JCPOA commitments, which pose a threat of creating irreversible proliferation implications in the region and beyond. We strongly urge Iran to reverse its alarming nuclear course, and to resume implementation of all JCPOA-related transparency measures, as well as its Additional Protocol.

Mr. Chair,

Our delegations support inclusive and meaningful steps towards creating the environment conducive for further nuclear disarmament negotiations, which should be aimed at a world without nuclear weapons based on all provisions of the NPT, including Article VI, and built on the principles of effectiveness, verification and undiminished security for all.

We are committed to working towards a meaningful outcome of this review cycle that would have Parties reaffirm the commitment to the NPT and recognize its enduring benefits. We call on all States to do their utmost in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.