Chair

I take the floor on behalf of the Vienna Group of Ten, comprising Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden.

The Vienna Group of Ten comprises states who are convinced of the vital benefits that the NPT brings to global peace and security, and on the value of sustained and constructive progress in the Treaty’s implementation. It is our firm and collective view that the NPT’s three pillars are of equal importance and mutually reinforcing and we welcome your commitment to ensuring due consideration is paid to all three pillars at this PrepCom.

Chair
The Vienna Group of Ten meets informally prior to each NPT meeting, with a view to contributing a working paper to facilitate discussion and secure substantive progress, predominantly on Pillar II and Pillar III issues. Our work has culminated as the tabling of Working Paper 11, which provides a carefully negotiated set of recommendations and supporting background on compliance and verification; nuclear safety, nuclear security, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, peaceful uses of nuclear technology, export controls and discouraging withdrawal from the NPT.

All recommendations have as their overriding objective the strengthening of the NPT and we share a common readiness to work on and add value to NPT topics in a constructive spirit, hopeful that this will contribute ideas, help bridge differences, build goodwill and facilitate agreement at NPT meetings.
Chair
As we meet today, nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine continue to be threatened by the Russian Federation’s illegal and unjustifiable war of aggression. Russia’s actions, including the illegal seizure of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant constitute grave violations of international law, including the UN Charter.

We condemn the Russian Federation’s war of aggression in Ukraine and call upon Russia to cease immediately all actions against and at Ukraine’s nuclear facilities, notably the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, and to implement all Ukraine-related resolutions adopted by the IAEA General Conference and Board of Governors. We underline our collective solidarity with Ukraine.

Chair
The Vienna Group of Ten considers the NPT to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We share the view that the strength of the Treaty comes from its near universality, and we are committed to protecting it and further advancing towards its universal application and implementation.

We recognise the critical role that safeguards play in maintaining confidence in the peaceful nature of nuclear activities and recommend that the PrepCom affirm that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with an Additional Protocol constitutes the current verification standard. We encourage those States Parties that have not yet done so, to bring into force an Additional Protocol and remaining States with a Small Quantity Protocol (SQP) based on the original standard text to amend or rescind such SQPs.

The Vienna Group of Ten considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be vital to the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, underpinned by the NPT, through which the nuclear test moratorium has become a de facto international norm.

We are committed to achieving the CTBT’s entry into force and urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and/or ratify the CTBT without delay.
We deeply regret the decision by the Russian Federation in November 2023, contrary to its undertakings under the 2010 NPT Action Plan, to revoke its ratification of the CTBT. This action runs counter to the global norm against nuclear testing, yet also serves to underline the norm’s continued importance. We urge the Russian Federation to reverse this decision without delay.

Chair
The Vienna Group of Ten recognises the central role of the NPT in fostering confidence and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology for those who chose to use it.

We recommend that the PrepCom underscore that peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology are contributing to improvements in human health, water management, agriculture and nutrition and can contribute in significant and broad-ranging ways to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, the ability to harness fully the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, depends on ensuring that such use and application continues to be accompanied by the implementation of safeguards obligations, and the rigorous adherence to the highest standards of nuclear safety and security.

Moreover, effective national export controls are central to enabling cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology thereby contributing to international peace and security. We underline the role export controls play in ensuring that relevant exports do not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices, and their means of delivery. The Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee serve to facilitate the trade of nuclear items for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all.

The group also emphasises the importance of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, science and technology.
Chair
The Vienna Group of Ten acknowledges the challenges facing the NPT which include insufficient progress on nuclear disarmament, actions contrary to implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments, non-compliance challenges and the lack of universality of the Treaty. Despite these challenges, we welcome the important initiatives to strengthen the NPT which showcase the continued strong support for the Treaty and the achievement of its goals.

As we progress through the 11th Review Cycle, the Vienna Group of Ten calls on all States Parties to redouble their efforts to realise the fundamental goals of the Treaty and engage in a spirit of constructive cooperation.

Thank you