Mr. Chair,

Thank you for chairing this working group meeting. It is a pleasure to see so many colleagues from Geneva in Vienna, as well as colleagues with whom we worked so hard together last year in New York during the 10th NPT Review Conference. The Chinese delegation is ready to actively communicate and cooperate with you and other delegations and contribute to this working group session.

I have listened carefully to the views expressed by various delegations this morning. Participating in this week’s meeting as well as the 1st Preparatory Committee session for NPT’s 11th Review Conference starting next week bring back memories of my attendance at the 1st Preparatory Committee session for the 1995 Review and Extension Conference in New York in May 1993. That was the first time that I, as a young diplomat, attended an international conference abroad. Over the past 30 years, the NPT mechanism has experienced stormy upheavals in the field of international politics and security, complex and profound changes in relations between major powers, and ups and downs in the process of multilateral arms control and non-proliferation. These are also the deep-seated causes of the difficulties experienced by the previous NPT review conferences during this period.

I am also reminded of the arduous four weeks in New York a year ago during the 10th NPT Review Conference, as an attendant and witness. Although the 10th Review Conference was a disappointment and is lamented by many colleagues here, yet in my view, the 10th Review Conference made an important mark in the NPT review process and has played a particularly important role. First, the fact that all NPT States parties were unswervingly committed to the Review and the Final Document negotiations amidst such extraordinarily complex international political
and security environment is, in itself, a full reflection of the belief in and commitment to the NPT by all States parties. Second, the failure of the final document also made most States parties aware that the NPT review process cannot be conducted in vacuum, which is bound to be affected by the international political and security environment.

Last year in New York, I told colleagues that we couldn’t blame the weather, but we should continue to work on the climate and environment. Let's keep working.

Mr. Chair,

This morning some colleagues recalled the two consecutive failures of the NPT review conference. Let me point out that these failures cannot be attributed to the lack of hard work on the part of participating delegations, nor to inability of all parties in making progress on the relevant substantive content of the Final Document, such as reporting. During the 10th Review Conference last year, I also offered my personal views on reporting to some colleagues, namely, nuclear disarmament is not achieved through reporting. What I am driving at is that the current international nuclear disarmament process is facing serious challenges. The reason in essence is that there are serious problems in the political relations and strategic security relations among Nuclear-Weapon States. They are facing the most complicated situation and the most daunting challenges since the end of the Cold War. Progress in the international nuclear disarmament process will only be achieved gradually when the relevant Nuclear-Weapon States, as well as the P5, are unwaveringly and steadfastly committed to strengthening their strategic dialogues and rebuild trust.

Before sharing China’s specific views on strengthening the NPT review process, I would like to share some general views. As we all know, the current NPT mechanism is facing the gravest challenges since the end of the Cold War, not only in terms of nuclear disarmament, but also in terms of non-proliferation. If we want to strengthen the NPT review process, we must examine the NPT regime in the existing context of international security. On the issue of nuclear disarmament, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the common efforts of the five Nuclear-Weapon States to maintain global strategic security and stability, and the importance of healthy, stable, and responsible relations between major powers. We must also set
sight on the important differences in nuclear strategies, policies, and nuclear postures of the Nuclear-Weapon States, on the basis of which the issue of the P5 jointly contributing to comprehensive implementation of NPT obligations will be addressed. Of course, as far as each individual Nuclear-Weapon State is concerned, there is no doubt of its obligation to implement Article VI of the NPT.

On the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, it is necessary on the one hand to adhere to the principle of nuclear non-proliferation, on the other hand one must also consider in an integrated manner the importance of not derogating from the legitimate security interests of NPT States parties and the right of all countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially to maintain and strengthen fair, reasonable, strict and effective international principles and norms within the NPT framework. At the same time, special attention should be paid to the new challenges posed to the NPT regime by some developments in recent years. In terms of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we need both adhere to the principles and also face up to the new situation and reality, and explore effective ways to ensure and strengthen the legitimate right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chair,

Strengthening the NPT review process is not an end in itself, the purpose of which is to adhere to the above-mentioned correct direction and ensure that these goals are attained in a fair, pragmatic and effective manner.

The current international security environment is undergoing profound and complex changes. International arms control and non-proliferation mechanisms have been seriously impacted. The Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation have once again become the underpinning of strategic security policy formulation of certain major powers. Against such a backdrop, the international community should take serious stock of the successes and failures in the implementation of the NPT, make efforts to bridge differences and strengthen coordination among all parties, further promote in parallel all the three pillars of the NPT, safeguard and reinforce the universality, authority and effectiveness of the Treaty and bring forward the cause of international peace, security and development.
With regard to strengthening the NPT review process, various parties have put forward many important views and proposals. We should give serious consideration to all rational and pragmatic propositions that are indeed conducive to improving the efficiency of the NPT review process. At the same time, I would like to emphasize that any measures to strengthen the NPT review process must not be divorced from international environment around us and the reality of international politics and security. I remember that more than 20 years ago, when I was a visiting fellow at Monterey Institute of International Studies, I participated in the "Model UN" project hosted by Mr. William Potter. Mr. Potter repeatedly reminded us that we should combine our efforts in simulation projects with the international situation and reality. This is true for the "Model UN", even more so for the NPT review process.

On strengthening the NPT review process, the Chinese delegation would like to share its views as follows:

Firstly, the three pillars should be promoted in a balanced manner. At present, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are all facing severe challenges. There should be no bias in favour or against one or the other in strengthening the review process and, in particular, the relationship between nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be properly handled. China takes very serious the issue of reducing nuclear risks and believes that this issue can continue to be- discussed under the agenda item on nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, the overall stability of the review mechanism should be maintained. It is regrettable that the past two review cycles did not yield substantive results, but the main reason is not the review mechanism itself, so it would not be appropriate to undertake a subversive reform of the existing review mechanism. The pattern of 1 Review Conference and 3 Preparatory Committee sessions every 5 years should be maintained and the structure of 3 Main Committees and their subsidiary bodies at the Review Conference should be continued. The existing arrangements for the election of the Conference President and the Chairs of Preparatory Committee, the existing framework of the outcome document and the consensual working method should be upheld. The content of the outcome document should not be pre-
determined in advance, and the practice of listing each and every Party’s viewpoints will only weaken the authority of the outcome document.

Thirdly, the efficiency should be improved as appropriate. China supports a number of pragmatic and feasible reform proposals, including properly reducing the duration of the Review Conference and the sessions of the Preparatory Committee; rationally coordinating the division of labour between the Review Conference and the Preparatory Committee, so as to avoid the latter duplicating the work of the former; appropriately enhancing coordination between the Chairs of Preparatory Committee and the Conference President, etc. Concerning the issue of whether a general debate should be held during the Preparatory Committees, I believe, no matter what arrangements we make, it must ensure that State parties will be able to exchange their views in a comprehensive manner concerning international situations during each and every Preparatory Committees session.

Fourthly, issues of transparency, reporting and accountability should be approached prudently. Many states attach importance to and highlight issues of transparency, reporting and accountability. However, different countries may have different purposes and motivations in this regard. China has always maintained that nuclear transparency does not happen in vacuum and different situations of different countries must be taken into account. Given the current international reality, it is obviously difficult to adopt a unified standard. Therefore, China will not support pushing the nuclear transparency agenda in the name of strengthening the NPT review process. China advocates that issues such as the frequency and the template of national reports of the Nuclear-Weapon States should be subject to voluntary consultation among the five Nuclear-Weapon States. This further highlights the importance and urgency of the P5 continuing to strengthen communication and coordination and playing a unique role in the NPT review process. China is in favour of the P5 continuing submitting their reports in accordance with the common framework reached in 2013. Some countries proposed that the Nuclear-Weapon States’ implementation reports should be discussed separately during the NPT review process. Let me state that should the reports of Nuclear-Weapon States be
discussed in such a manner, the reports of non-Nuclear-Weapon States under nuclear umbrella should also be discussed.

Mr. Chair,

China is ready to work with all States parties to continue exploring how to strengthen the NPT review process in a serious and responsible manner. We are committed to ensure that the Treaty will effectively respond to the serious challenges posed to the three pillars of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the international situation which is profoundly complex and evolving and continue to contribute to maintaining world peace and promoting sustainable development.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.