Mr. Chair,

Suriname has the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), in its capacity of Pro Tempore President.

With regard to Nuclear Disarmament, UNASUR joins the efforts of the international community in moving towards the negotiation of a universal and legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons, considering that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, and that their very existence diminishes the security of all States, including those who possess them. While nuclear weapons exist, there will be a real risk of their use and proliferation. Nuclear disarmament is the only credible way to consolidate the non-proliferation regime.

UNASUR expresses its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and takes this opportunity to congratulate Mexico for holding in Nayarit, early this year, the Second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We strongly support the Conference’s call for an international legally binding instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We call upon all States, especially Nuclear-Weapon States, to participate in the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons to be held in Vienna in December of 2014.

UNASUR welcomes the commemoration – at the Ministerial level – of the first ever International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26th of September, aimed at mobilizing international efforts to attain the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Priority should be given to the negotiation of a convention on nuclear disarmament that would completely ban such weapons.
Mr. Chair,

UNASUR reiterates its commitment to the NPT and to the balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, nonproliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is UNASUR's view, however, that the disarmament pillar has suffered from a serious implementation deficit.

In this regard, UNASUR States' aspiration, as we approach the end of the current review cycle of the NPT, is that new and concrete measures towards nuclear disarmament are taken in the next Review Conference, to be held in 2015; including the adoption of a legal commitment for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, with clear benchmarks and a multilaterally agreed timeframe.

Mr. Chair,

It is a legitimate interest of Non-Nuclear Weapon States – including all UNASUR members – that Nuclear-Weapon States provide unequivocal and legally binding guarantees of not using or threatening to use those weapons against them. Therefore, we call for the negotiation and adoption, in the shortest possible time, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

Likewise, we call upon Nuclear-Weapon States to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines, security policies and military strategies, as part of the process towards achieving the complete elimination of these lethal weapons, regardless of their type or location.

Mr. Chair,

Our countries will continue to support the efforts aimed at reviving the works of the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. There is an urgent need to start negotiations on new international legal instruments governing fundamental issues for disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chair,

We reaffirm the need for all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty, particularly those in Annex 2, to do it as soon as possible, as a sign of their political will and their commitment to international peace and security. We thus welcome the ratification of the CTBT by Niue and the Republic of the Congo.

Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the Member States of UNASUR reiterate the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing.

Mr. Chair,

UNASUR is very proud of the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace on January 29, 2014, on the occasion of the Second CELAC Summit held in Cuba, a historic decision aimed at uprooting forever the use or threat of use of force from our region.
As members of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, the States of UNASUR urge all Nuclear-Weapon States to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will help to eliminate the risk of use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

The States of UNASUR express their deep concern that the International Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction has yet to be convened. UNASUR strongly believes that such a zone would be a significant contribution to the peace process in the Middle East and the world, and therefore reiterates its call for this conference to be held as soon as possible, with the active participation of all States in the region, under the mandate established by the decisions of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

Mr. Chair,

The Member States of UNASUR would also like to take avail of this important occasion to underline the essential contribution of the IAEA in common efforts to establish a more secure world. Also, we would like to underline the importance of the Brazilian-Argentinean Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials – the only bi-national organization of safeguards in the world, which is an initiative of two of our Member States.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, UNASUR wishes to reiterate its call for a world free of nuclear weapons, so that humanity can direct resources devoted to the maintenance and modernization of nuclear arsenals to the social and economic development of the peoples.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.