Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania associates itself with the statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of the EU and its Member States and would like to further elaborate on some issues of particular importance to my country: strengthening the global non-proliferation regime, nuclear safety and security, and the violation by the Russian Federation of its security guarantees towards Ukraine.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation regime and a vital part of the international security architecture. Its three mutually reinforcing pillars should be promoted in a balanced manner to further enhance credibility and integrity of the NPT regime.

Lithuania reiterates its enduring commitment to the goal of general and complete disarmament and the world free of nuclear weapons. Until we reach this goal, effective measures related to nuclear arms control and further disarmament, especially reduction of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, remain of greatest importance.

It is essential to maintain inclusive approach and avoid fragmentation of the international community in our quest for the world without nuclear weapons. Lithuania believes that this process should consist of a solid framework of mutually reinforcing and complementary treaties, institutions and commitments. This process must be multilateral, as inclusive as possible and in particular involving states in possession of nuclear weapons.

International community already has a number of such multilateral “building blocks”, yet there is an urgent need for further logical steps in this direction. In this regard Lithuania calls for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and immediate start of the negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

Lithuania, as a non-Nuclear Weapon State, considers confidence building measures, reciprocal transparency and effective verification as an essential part of the nuclear arms control and disarmament process. Those measures should apply both to strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons. Yet, non-strategic nuclear weapons should be a priority since they are not regulated by existing reduction treaties.

Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania remains committed to ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The inalienable rights should go hand in hand with the responsible behaviour of
States Parties in terms of abiding by their non-proliferation obligations, recognised international standards, conventions and safeguard agreements.

Lithuania attaches great importance to increasing transparency and trust between countries developing nuclear construction projects, in particular between neighbouring countries if the project is being developed close to national borders. In this regard, all nuclear power plants – planned, under construction or operational – should meet the highest nuclear safety requirements, in full compliance with all relevant international agreements.

The international non-proliferation regime, based on the NPT obligations, the IAEA verification and safeguards system, has prevented significant spread of nuclear weapons. However, it has not stopped proliferation completely, as new and existing challenges, both from state and non-state actors, confront the international community.

At the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, 58 world leaders made concrete agreements to prevent terrorists from getting their hands on materials that could be used to make a nuclear weapon. NSS countries agreed to reduce the amount of dangerous nuclear material, improve the security of radioactive material and strengthen the international exchange of information.

Lithuania resolutely implements commitments undertaken at the Seoul and the Hague Nuclear Security Summits. Lithuanian Nuclear Security Center of Excellence, as national capacity building venue, trains officers in the areas of prevention, detection, response and investigation of nuclear and radiological smuggling. The Center of Excellence, with valuable support from bilateral and multilateral partners, expands its international outreach to the neighbouring countries as well as to the countries of Eastern Europe, hosting international seminars and study visits.

Mr. Chairman,

Twenty years ago Ukraine, following Belarus and Kazakhstan, joined the NPT as non-nuclear weapon State and removed Soviet-era nuclear weapons – the third largest arsenal at the time – from its territory in exchange for security assurances. It was a historic achievement for the nuclear disarmament regime and a huge step towards the future without nuclear weapons.

In return, under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the nuclear weapon States, including the Russian Federation, reaffirmed their commitment to respect the independence, sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and guaranteed that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine.

By illegally occupying Crimea, pouring its weapons and troops into Ukrainian territory and continuing to use all means to destabilise the situation in the country Russian Federation has violated its obligations under the UN Charter, the Budapest Memorandum, as well as the very foundations of the international law. These blatant violations have serious ramifications on the NPT, as well as the whole course of disarmament process and we condemn them in the strongest terms. Lithuania urges the Russian Federation to respect Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the denuclearized status of the occupied Crimea.

Thank you.