Mr. Chair,

As we gather to take stock of the status of the NPT, it is important to remind ourselves of what has been achieved, and that the nuclear non-proliferation regime is robust, effective and on the right track. However, while there is much to be said about our collective efforts to strengthen the regime, we must remain vigilant and focused on the challenges ahead.

The non-proliferation obligations set out in the NPT require non-nuclear-weapon states to conclude a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to implement export controls aimed at preventing diversion to a nuclear weapons program.

The IAEA plays a unique and fundamental role in verifying State compliance with their safeguards obligations. Canada believes that a comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA), together with an additional protocol (AP), is the current verification standard pursuant to Article III.1. Together, a CSA and AP provide the basis for the IAEA to draw an annual conclusion regarding the peaceful nature of a State’s nuclear program. We urge those States that have yet to sign and ratify an AP to do so.

The NPT also supports furthering the application of effective safeguards. To this end, Canada welcomes efforts by the IAEA to apply the State-level Concept to the implementation of safeguards. We support the continuing evaluation by States Parties of existing safeguards measures to ensure they remain effective, and evolve as required to achieve the objectives of the NPT.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between the E3/EU+3 and Iran in 2015 constitutes an important element of the non-proliferation regime, which, as long as it is fully implemented by Iran and verified by the IAEA, helps to build the confidence of the international community that Iran’s nuclear program is exclusively peaceful in nature. The IAEA has an essential role in this process and Canada has contributed $11.5 million to the IAEA’s verification efforts in Iran since 2014.

Mr. Chair,

Canada remains concerned with non-compliance by North Korea and Syria with their non-proliferation obligations. These cases undermine the NPT, and present a direct threat to the broader non-proliferation regime.

North Korea’s ongoing efforts to enhance the capabilities of its nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile delivery systems pose a serious challenge to international peace and security. Canada also deplores North Korea’s relentless sanctions evasion and related proliferation activities, and calls on the international community to strengthen our collective counter-proliferation efforts and support the full implementation of relevant UNSC resolutions.
Canada stands ready to support efforts to forge peaceful multilateral solutions to address North Korea’s illegal WMD programs and enhance security in the region. We welcome recent diplomatic engagement on the Korean Peninsula and hope that it will lead to sustained dialogue toward North Korea’s complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization. For its part, in January 2018, Canada co-hosted with the United States a Foreign Ministers’ meeting to examine available avenues to address this pressing international threat. We continue to call upon North Korea to resume adherence to the NPT and abide by its safeguards and relevant international obligations.

With regard to Syria, Canada deeply regrets that Syria has yet to respond to the IAEA’s repeated requests to resolve that country’s non-compliance with its non-proliferation obligations, in connection with issues related to the Dair Alzour site and three other related sites. Canada underscores the need for Syria to uphold its safeguards obligations under the Treaty.

Concerning export controls, Article III.2 of the NPT stipulates that each State Party undertake not to provide nuclear-related exports to any non-nuclear-weapon state for peaceful purposes, unless the transfers are subject to the safeguards required by Article III.1 of the Treaty. We underline the need for all States Party to exercise continued vigilance in their nuclear export controls.

To this end, Canada continues to value the role that the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group play in facilitating legitimate nuclear trade among States while respecting non-proliferation commitments.

Mr. Chair,

It has been observed that not all States Parties see themselves as having a stake in the safeguards regime at the heart of this Committee's work. Canada does not share this view. While the world is a dramatically safer place because of the NPT, our collective security is not ensured unless we are fully confident that cases of proliferation and non-compliance are addressed, and for this the international safeguards regime must continue to work robustly. This is as true for states without significant nuclear facilities as it is for those of us with large domestic nuclear industries. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the NPT’s entry into force, it is vital that we not lose sight of the positive strategic impact that safeguards have had - and continue to have – for all States.

Finally, as a contributor to the efforts of the “Vienna Group of Ten”, Canada draws attention to the Group’s Working Paper on ‘Vienna Issues’ that has been submitted to the Secretariat, as well as the NPDF’s Working Paper on the issue of safeguards. We believe that these will make a valuable contribution to this Committee’s deliberations.

Thank you.