

General Statement

Mr. Chairperson,

I take the floor on behalf of the following states : Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Turkey

1. We are all united in our common goal of attaining a world without nuclear weapons. We believe there is a pragmatic and effective way forward, leading to global zero. Over the course of recent multilateral disarmament processes, through interventions and working papers, we outlined the elements to that “progressive” approach.
2. We have also underlined the importance of addressing relevant political, security and humanitarian considerations.
3. This approach begins with a hard assessment of the realities of the current international situation. Nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved without taking regional and global security considerations into account. While recognizing these realities, they should not be used as an excuse for inaction.
4. The underlying premise of the “progressive” approach is that, if we want to see real progress, we must all be in this together- including states with nuclear weapons. We need to be open and inclusive in advancing nuclear disarmament.
5. We do not claim our approach will be swift or easy. We do believe it will take us forward substantively, given there is no “quick fix”.
6. We already know many of the steps we need to take. These have been outlined many times. The 2010 NPT Action Plan remains to this day the gold standard for a truly sustainable and truly global project.

7. Far from maintaining the status quo, our goal is to take practical and effective actions now to advance disarmament. In this regard, there are several proposals before us at this First Committee for our consideration.
8. Mr Chair. Many states have advocated for a new initiative to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament through negotiation of a prohibition on nuclear weapons.
9. While we respect these states desire to see change, it is our understanding that such a negotiation would only engage non-nuclear weapon states that are already bound by the NPT not to develop nuclear weapons and would likely mirror existing obligations, creating confusion and ambiguity – without any mechanism to ensure that obligations were being fulfilled.
10. We would like the international community to focus on the hard and indispensable work that remains ahead of us on key initiatives, including those contained in the 2010 NPT Action Plan.
11. While the progressive approach will take time and effort, it is the key to building the confidence required for states to no longer consider nuclear weapons necessary for their security, and to proceed towards the verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons we all seek to achieve.