Mr Chair,

Iceland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic Countries but let me highlight few key issues from a national perspective.

Mr Chair,

There is an urgent need to reinvigorate and recommit to the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda to counter the growing tensions, distrust, and lack of compliance that is becoming all too prevalent.

This urgency is particularly relevant in the nuclear domain where we need to safeguard and strengthen the agreements that have kept us away from the wasteful arms race of the past.

The NPT continues to play a crucial role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons while at the same time safeguarding the benefits of
nuclear technology for civilian use. We are committed to doing our bit in working towards a successful outcome of the Review Conference next year and the full implementation of the treaty, not least Article six. Iceland fully supports the various supporting initiatives, in particular the Stockholm initiative.

There are some encouraging signs that we should not forget, including the extension of the New Start Treaty, between the United States and Russia earlier this year. We look forward to a positive outcome from their ongoing dialogue on strategic stability. Furthermore, we encourage China to engage with Russia and the United States on nuclear arms control and disarmament.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has, for the last 25 years, served us well and enjoys broad support by the UN members. All states, not already members, should sign and ratify the treaty, particularly those states belonging to Annex II of the CTBT. Furthermore, Iceland reaffirms its strong support for commencing negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

There are rays of hope but also persistent dark clouds on the horizon, not least the continued threat that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea poses to global security with its illegal nuclear program in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. The DPRK must revert to responsible actions and join the CTBT and return to the NPT. We encourage redoubled diplomatic efforts to seek solutions to this rogue behaviour by the DPRK.

Upholding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is paramount in sustaining global non-proliferation. We urge Iran to comply with the
agreement and fulfil their commitments in full cooperation with the IAEA - and return to the negotiations in Vienna without further delay.

Mr Chair,

The use of chemical weapons is utterly unacceptable by anyone anywhere. All such incidents should be thoroughly investigated, and the perpetrators of such heinous crimes held accountable. Iceland strongly supports the role of the OPCW and its ongoing investigative efforts, which are guided by strong integrity, impartiality, and outstanding expertise.

Mr Chair,

The importance of preserving, universalising, and developing treaties and initiatives in the sphere of conventional weapons has direct implication for many of today's conflicts.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to undermine peace, development, and human rights. We call on all UN member states to join the Arms Trade Treaty. The effective implementation of the Treaty and the Programme of Action on small arms is key to reversing this negative trend. Another positive step in furthering disarmament is the promising effort to address explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), an undertaking which Iceland firmly supports.

Mr Chair,
Access to open, free, secure, and safe cyberspace is vital. But it also makes us more vulnerable to irresponsible behaviour, disinformation, surveillance, and attacks by state and non-state actors. We need to build on existing international legal frameworks and norms and bring together different UN workstreams into a single Programme of Action for advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace.

Although often overlooked, outer space activities and assets are of growing importance for our societies and sustainable development overall. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that increasing outer space activities continue to be peaceful and benefit all.

Another new challenge in disarmament that needs to be coherently addressed, drawing on existing international law, norms, and conventions, is lethal autonomous weapons. Iceland supports the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and the 11 guiding principles and highlights the importance of ensuring full compliance with International Humanitarian Law.

Mr Chair,

Disarmament is key to preventing conflict, building peace, and fostering stability. It certainly takes time, resources, and effort, but it will always be a better investment than the alternative. Finally, we need to firmly commit to promoting the active and meaningful participation of women in arms control and disarmament, in accordance with UNSCR 1325.

Let me end by wishing us all a productive and constructive session.
Thank you.