Mr. President,

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Malaysia is honoured to participate in this inaugural Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), a gathering of particular moment in our collective endeavours to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Indeed, this is a goal which has been deferred for far too long, and one towards which all nations and peoples should redouble their efforts.

2. In our national submission to the International Court of Justice prior to the rendering of its seminal 1996 Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Malaysia deplored the “genocidal nature” of such weapons, the existence of which had “created an unprecedented disparity of power between the nuclear ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’.“ Malaysia further asserted that, if no progress were made in the implementation of Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), such disparity would persist and continue to pose grave threats to human civilisation.

3. These comments have unfortunately been vindicated by the passage of time, and remain valid more than a quarter-century later. Today, nuclear weapons still feature prominently in the strategies and doctrines of states which possess them, purportedly as elements required for the maintenance of security and stability. Arsenalas are constantly modernised and upgraded, and the very concept of deterrence is predicated on the credibility of the threat that nuclear weapons may be used. The inherent danger of these weapons is thrown into sharp relief in times of heightened geopolitical tension. This poignantly reminds us that nuclear weapons must be entirely abolished if we are truly to realise the aspirations for peace and security on the part of the global community at large, rather than a select few.
4. The TPNW is undoubtedly a significant contribution to the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. It is underpinned by strong ethical and security imperatives, and rests on a firm legal foundation. It reflects the will of its States Parties to fill a long-standing lacuna in the disarmament regime through a forward-looking instrument proscribing nuclear weapons altogether, in a manner which is complementary to the NPT.

5. Nonetheless, the adoption and entry into force of the TPNW should be regarded as only the first steps in reinvigorating global discourse, and above all, action, on disarmament. Much more needs to be done to unravel deeply rooted doctrinal approaches and policies which aim to perpetuate the existence of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

6. Malaysia commends you and the Austrian Government for your able stewardship of the preparatory process leading to this Meeting. We are heartened that States Parties and Signatory States, as well as academics and non-governmental organisations, have had productive exchanges of views on a broad swathe of issues concerning the overarching principles and effective operationalisation of the TPNW.

7. The Treaty’s purpose evidently goes beyond political stigmatisation of nuclear weapons and their dire humanitarian consequences. States Parties fully intend the TPNW to be an instrument of great consequence, in very practical terms, based on sound scientific and technical considerations. It is our fervent belief that the Treaty will make impactful and concrete contributions in our steady advance towards the day when the entire world will finally become one unbroken nuclear-weapon-free zone.

8. Malaysia is confident that the TPNW’s carefully crafted provisions, and our unceasing work as States Parties, will lay the groundwork for the prospective accession, God-willing, of nuclear-hosting states and ultimately, states which own, possess or control nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. To this end, we should continue to engage constructively with all relevant parties, even those who are among the Treaty’s most fervent detractors.
9. As we commit ourselves unequivocally to the objectives and principles of the Treaty, much work inevitably remains to be done. Let us move forward in the same spirit of solidarity, and concern for life and the future of our planet, which have enabled us to come this far.

10. May succeeding generations be saved not only from the scourge of war - as boldly declared in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations - but also from the unspeakable horrors of nuclear weapons, in the interest of common security, peace and sustainable development for all humanity.

Thank you.