Mr. President,

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, let me at the outset convey on behalf of the Government of Samoa, our congratulations on the assumption of your office and we extend our full support in the execution of your mandate during this inaugural meeting.

As a small island developing state, our hopes for a better future for all our peoples rely on the willingness of all states to cooperate with the view towards respecting the values enshrined in the UN Charter. Working towards peace and security and addressing global threats is a collective task requiring common action on all of us, in good faith, as custodians of the future. Wars and conflicts is not a legacy we can afford to bequeath future generations.

The total elimination of all forms of nuclear weapons is a vital step on the road to a more secure world, where the threat of total destruction of our planet is no longer a distinct possibility. Mutually assured destruction is not a mantra that Samoa supports and is premised on the belief that common sense and sanity would always prevail. However, one can look at what is happening now in Eastern Europe and the Korean Peninsula as an example of how the judgement of one person may not be the best defense against the assurance of a future where nuclear war is not a threat.

Rising tensions, the modernisation of nuclear arsenals, the continued reliance on nuclear weapons in military and security concepts as well as on high alert postures, and threats regarding the possible use of nuclear weapons are widely seen as increasing the risk of a deliberate or accidental nuclear detonation.
For its part, the Pacific is only too well aware of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear detonation as a result of its own experience, with over 300 nuclear weapon tests carried out over many years in our region, this has resulted in adverse long-term humanitarian and environmental impacts to many parts of the Pacific. Efforts by Pacific countries to stop this testing; to “promote the national security of each country in the region and the common security of all”; and so far as lies within the region’s power, to retain “the bounty and beauty of [its] land and sea”; are key factors in the adoption of the Treaty of Rarotonga in 1985 and its establishment of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons pose a significant threat to our Pacific Islands and way of life with the imminent issue of nuclear waste. Impacts of any nuclear waste of potential harm of any level to reach our shores would mean the end of our way of life and livelihood given we are Ocean States heavily reliant on our ocean for sustenance and continued food security.

Mr President,
We strongly affirm that nuclear weapons—for as long as they continue to exist—would continue to pose a serious threat to global collective peace and security, to our environment and our continued existence.

At this important meeting, we must commit to concrete actions to implement, to the fullest extent possible, our obligations as States parties to the TPNW including, providing assistance to victims of nuclear weapon use and testing, remEDIATE contaminated environments (Article 6), and universalising the treaty (Article 12). It will also be an opportunity for States to discuss some of the treaty’s technical details, like setting a deadline for the elimination of nuclear weapons for nuclear-armed states that join under Article 4 of the treaty.

We want a future of peaceful societies, free from conflict, and the threats of nuclear weapons which must be dealt with through international law and cooperation, and in accordance with the provisions of this treaty.

I thank you.