Kari Eken Wollebæk
First Secretary, Embassy of Norway

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today and take part in this important conference.

Let me first say that my government is very pleased to contribute financially to this event and cooperate with the PIR centre. We like the title of the conference. Norway believes in effective multilateralism, and nuclear disarmament is high on our agenda.

A world free of nuclear weapons has been a longstanding aim of Norway’s foreign policy, even during the Cold War. This goal was reconfirmed in the white paper on disarmament and non-proliferation submitted to the Norwegian Parliament in 2008. In general, Norway seeks the highest level of security for all, at the lowest possible level of armament.

Briefly looking back, the positive momentum for nuclear disarmament following the end of the Cold War contributed to the landmark indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. And it helped to forge agreement on the 13 steps to achieve complete disarmament at the NPT Review Conference in 2000.

This momentum has, however, been lost due to a number of challenges such as the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea, the threat of nuclear terrorism, the stalled negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and the failure to achieve universal ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

However, I hope and believe we are now at a turning point. Former and present leaders in several countries have called for renewed commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. The joint statement by Presidents Obama and Medvedev on 1 April was an important signal. The leaders of the two largest nuclear weapon states committed themselves to demonstrating leadership in reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the world. It is very positive that the Russian Federation and the US are
now in the process of negotiating a new, legally binding treaty to replace the START (the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty).

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking at further steps to be taken, I believe that it is crucial that national leaders in all states should engage personally with, and make a national priority of, nuclear disarmament and realising the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.

National leaders should seek to involve key domestic stakeholders and their populations in particular. Moreover, disarmament is an interdisciplinary endeavour and national leaders should also seek to engage experts from all relevant areas, including science, diplomacy, politics, law and the military.

As I already mentioned it is very encouraging that the United States and Russia are committed to reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the world significantly. It will also be important to engage China, and other states that possess nuclear weapons, in a strategic dialogue to develop a cooperative approach to nuclear security.

In order to pave the way for even deeper cuts, non-nuclear weapon states should cooperate with nuclear weapon states to develop the technology needed for verifying disarmament. Nuclear weapon states should seize the opportunity presented by reductions in nuclear weapon numbers to demonstrate this technology. In this spirit, Norway has established a partnership with the United Kingdom and Vertic. The aim is to develop systems that enable us to verify that actual disarmament has taken place, while at the same time protecting sensitive information.

Another important step is for all states that possess nuclear weapons to make every effort to reduce their reliance on these weapons as a contribution towards their elimination.

Nuclear weapon states are also encouraged to change the operational status of their nuclear weapons in order to increase decision time in the event that use is contemplated, and to take other steps to promote strategic stability.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is crucial to prevent a new nuclear arms race. Until the treaty enters into force, the existing moratorium on nuclear testing should be strengthened. Each state that has tested nuclear weapons in the past should pledge that it will not be the first to resume testing. We hope that the US will ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

A Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) is vital to advance disarmament and prevent proliferation. In addition to starting negotiations on an FMCT, the international community should consider the creation of a voluntary Fissile Material Control Initiative (FMCI) to enhance the security and transparency of all nuclear material—including material that may not be subject to an FMCT. Norway is encouraged by the decision in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to begin negotiations on a verifiable FMCT.
The establishment of regional nuclear weapons-free zones is an important contribution by non-nuclear weapon states to achieving the zero option. Norway has been financing a project carried out by a South African institute to secure the last accessions needed for the Treaty of Pelindaba to enter into force.

Eliminating nuclear arms requires a robust and credible non-proliferation regime. All states that have not yet done so should adopt a Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement and an Additional Protocol. In addition they should sign, ratify and implement all relevant multilateral instruments to enhance the safety and security of their nuclear materials. We must close existing loopholes and empower the IAEA.

In order to help avert the awful prospect of nuclear terrorism, all states that possess nuclear weapons are urged to take all necessary measures to ensure that their weapons do not fall into unauthorised hands.

We should aim to create a non-discriminatory system of nuclear fuel supply in close collaboration with the IAEA. In this regard, a serious and sustained dialogue between producer and consumer is needed so that consumers have an opportunity to explain their needs and suppliers have an opportunity to tailor arrangements and incentives accordingly. Norway has pledged financial support to a planned fuel bank under the auspices of the IAEA. We have also voiced our support for the Russian proposal to create a reserve of low-enriched uranium and the German proposal to establish a Multilateral Enrichment Sanctuary Project. In our view these three proposals are compatible and complementary to each other.

During the International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in Oslo on 26–27 February 2008, the idea was launched to convene a broadly-based high-level Intergovernmental Panel on Nuclear Disarmament, analogous to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to advise governments on the core requirements for abolishing nuclear weapons. This idea may still be worth considering.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the beginning of my statement I mentioned the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. We all know that the 2005 Review Conference was unsuccessful. The international community is now at a crossroads. If we should fail at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the NPT runs the risk of gradual erosion. That would undermine our common security.

A successful NPT conference in 2010 is therefore a crucial multilateral step towards nuclear disarmament.

We have some reasons to be optimistic. The NPT Prepcom in New York in May this year was guided by a positive spirit, and all the procedural questions were resolved.

The prime task of the 2010 Review Conference will be to revive a broad-based, common understanding of how to address nuclear dangers, and how to ensure that peaceful nuclear applications can be ensured in a more secure world without nuclear
weapons. The Review Conference should agree on a programme of work up to 2015, as well as steps to be taken beyond that date.

If we are to succeed, all States Parties must fulfil their obligations to the NPT. The three pillars are closely interlinked. There can be no NPT à la carte. Full nuclear disarmament can only be achieved when there is full confidence that no one can circumvent the non-proliferation regime.

The much needed steps to tighten up the non-proliferation regime can only be taken if there is an unequivocal and irreversible process towards complete elimination of existing nuclear arsenals. Strengthened non-proliferation must also facilitate peaceful uses.

If we are to succeed in 2010, we must take an innovative approach. We must build bridges, we must reach out across regional groupings and overcome past polarisations. The NPT process must not be considered a zero-sum game. The 2010 outcome must be a win-win for all.

There is a risk that the NPT could be eroded, but we have a choice. It is up to the world community to consolidate and further strengthen the NPT and to move forward with multilateral steps on nuclear disarmament. Norway hopes that the world community will seize this opportunity.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing I would like to thank the PIR centre for organising this conference and wish you all fruitful and rewarding discussions.

Thank you.