Mr Chairman,

Allow me to express Uganda’s appreciation to Austria for hosting this most important conference.

The presentations and testimonies at this conference clearly underline the grave threat that is posed to all humanity by the continued existence of nuclear weapons.

It is clear from the evidence presented here, as well as from previous conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, no state or international organization has the capacity to provide an effective humanitarian response in the event of a nuclear
attack of any scale. Moreover, as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have stated, it would not be possible to establish such a capacity.

The continuous existence of nuclear weapons by any right whatsoever threaten global peace and security, and stand against the principles of Humanitarian International law.

Although the Pelindaba Treaty prohibits any use, acquiring, manufacturing, testing or developing of nuclear weapons by state parties, and claims the will to “protect African states against possible nuclear attack on their territories”, Africa, as part of the global village and Uganda in particular would be heavily affected by the detonation of nuclear weapons anywhere in the world. As demonstrated in the International Conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, there are no national or international bodies that could adequately respond or mitigate the effects of a nuclear detonation, and these effects would spread far beyond borders and generations.

Having confronted and discussed the evidence on the risk and impact of a nuclear weapon detonation in Oslo, Nayarit and now Vienna, we as states have a responsibility to act on this knowledge.

Uganda believes that the time has come for a diplomatic process to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons. Such an instrument should be negotiated even if the nuclear armed states do not participate. A treaty
banning nuclear weapons will represent a significant step towards their complete elimination.

The time for action has come. We should not delay.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.