Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hu Xiaodi
at the First Committee of the 57th Session of
the United Nations General Assembly

(New York, 1 October 2002)
Mr. Chairman,

First of all, please allow me to congratulate you on your Chairmanship of the First Committee of this session of the UNGA. With your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skills, you will surely guide this session to success. You and other members of the bureau can rest assured of the full cooperation and support from the Chinese delegation. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Erdos of Hungary for his excellent work as the Chairman of the last session.

Mr. Chairman,

Not long ago, we commemorated the anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks. While sharing the grief of those bereaved, we should draw lessons from this tragedy, soberly examine from a wider perspective the problems and challenges to international security, and seek effective ways to achieve lasting peace and common security in the world.

In recent years, with the economic globalization rapidly unfolding, countries are sharing much more common interests and ever-closer security links. There is greater awareness of countries for dialogue and cooperation. Relations among major countries have improved steadily. Peace and development remains the main theme of the times. However, we should not overlook the problems in the field of international security. Non-traditional security threats such as terrorism are posing a grave challenge to international security. The tragic incident on September 11th is a stark manifestation of such development. Although the international efforts against terrorism have made significant headway, the threat of terrorism is far from being eradicated. In both the traditional and non-traditional security dimensions, instability and unpredictability in the overall international security situation is increasing.

In this new situation, to avoid history being repeated and create a peaceful and prosperous new century would depend on our ability to grasp the historic opportunity and cope with the new challenges. It is imperative to foster a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual-benefit, equality and cooperation, and to address diverse security problems, old and new, with new thinking and approach. Firstly, we should strive for the democratization of international relations. Exclusion and confrontation should give way to inclusion and dialogue, so as to improve the overall international relations and achieve a new situation where all countries co-exist in a win-win relationship. Secondly, we should promote multilateralism and resolve the problems facing the international community through dialogue and cooperation. Thirdly, we should intensify diplomatic efforts to settle regional hot spots so that lasting peace and stability could be realized in all regions. Fourthly, we should take a comprehensive approach and address both the symptoms and root causes of non-traditional security threats such as terrorism and transnational organized crimes. While making joint efforts to combat terrorism, we also need to have a long-term perspective and try to eradicate the underlying social and economic sources.
Mr. Chairman,

To prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery means and to eliminate those weapons eventually is crucial for maintaining and enhancing international peace and security. The increasing threat of terrorism today has brought more urgency to international non-proliferation efforts and new challenges to the international non-proliferation regime.

The proliferation of WMD and their delivery means has complex causes and is directly related to the regional and global security environment. Its fundamental solution requires the improvement of overall international relations and lies in political, legal and diplomatic means. Use or threat of force does not help and would prove counter-productive. Full participation of and close cooperation among all states is the prerequisite for the success of international non-proliferation efforts, and the guarantee for the impartiality and sustainability in these efforts. In this regard, we should give full play to the role of the United Nations and other international organizations.

China supports the efforts by the United Nations, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the valuable report submitted by the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles. China is in favor of making necessary amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, and hopes that all parties will bridge their differences in a constructive manner so as to enable the early conclusion of the amending process. In March 2002, China completed the legal procedures for the entry into force of the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement between China and IAEA, the first among the five Nuclear-Weapon States to do so. We encourage those states that have not yet done so to take the same step at an early date, thus contributing to the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards regime.

Mr. Chairman,

China has always been firm in its policy of not supporting, encouraging or assisting other countries to develop WMD. As a country with certain scientific, technological and industrial capabilities, China is fully aware of its international non-proliferation responsibility. Over decades, China has adopted strict measures on the domestic management and export control of sensitive items and technologies, making concrete contribution to the international non-proliferation process.

For years, China has constantly improved its export control mechanism and promulgated a series of laws and regulations on the export control of sensitive items on the basis of its own practice and drawing upon the experience of other countries. In view of the new situation after its entry into WTO and the September 11th terrorist attacks, China has intensified its efforts to enhance its export control by legal means. Recently, the Chinese Government promulgated the Regulations on Export Control of Missiles and Missile-related Items and Technologies and the Missiles and Missile-related Items and Technologies
Export Control List. China has thus put its export control of missiles and related items and technologies as well as missile-related dual-use items and technologies into a legal framework. Moreover, to further improve export controls of chemical and biological dual-use items, the Chinese Government will promulgate in the near future the Administrative Rules on Export Control of Chemical Items and Related Equipment and Technologies and the Regulations on Export Control of Biological Dual-use Items and Related Equipment and Technologies. With the promulgation of the above-mentioned regulations, China will establish a comprehensive system of export controls over sensitive items covering nuclear, biological, chemical and missile fields. We will continue to enhance law enforcement to ensure full implementation of the existing laws and regulations, and to improve our non-proliferation mechanism in light of the changing situation. We would also like to further broaden and deepen exchanges and cooperation with other countries in the non-proliferation field so as to make greater contribution to the international non-proliferation process.

Mr. Chairman,

Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually complementary. Without effective non-proliferation, disarmament could hardly be achieved; without progress in disarmament, non-proliferation could hardly be effective and sustainable. Therefore, to preserve the authority and universality of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is critical for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In this connection, China welcomes the decision of Cuba to prepare for the accession to the NPT and the ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. China supports the full implementation of the thirteen nuclear disarmament steps as contained in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference on the premise of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all countries. China always supports and is ready to contribute to the NPT review process.

China welcomes the new treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on the reduction of strategic offensive forces. China hopes that the U.S. and Russia, as countries with the largest nuclear arsenals and bearing special and primary responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, will continue to drastically reduce and destroy their nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible way.

Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important step toward nuclear disarmament. China supports its early entry into force. It is critical for all the Nuclear-Weapon States to maintain the nuclear testing moratorium before the treaty enters into force. China has actively participated in the work of the CTBTO PrepCom and is carrying out domestic preparations for the implementation of the treaty. China is ready to work with the international community to facilitate the early entry into force of the treaty.

To prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is of significance in the nuclear disarmament process. China supports the early negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We hope
that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) could reach a comprehensive and balanced program of work as soon as possible, so as to commence the FMCT negotiation. China has shown considerable flexibility to that end. We expect other countries to respond positively so that the CD could carry out substantive work at an early date.

Mr. Chairman,

After more than a decade since the end of the Cold War, it has become common aspiration of the international community to shake off the Cold War mentality. To achieve this objective, we should, first and foremost, establish a new concept of cooperative security and seek common security for all countries. In the field of strategic security, the reliance on nuclear weapons should be diminished. To develop missile defense systems designed to strengthen unilateral deterrence, lower the threshold for nuclear weapons use and increase targets for nuclear attacks run counter to the trend of the times. That is not only detrimental to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, but also harmful to international peace, security and stability.

Mr. Chairman,

As a Chinese saying goes, prevention is better than cure. One of the major purposes of arms control is to prevent new arms races in new fields. Today, this preventive function is most salient in outer space. With the dramatic development of space science and technology, more and more countries are benefiting from the peaceful uses of outer space, and our daily life is increasingly linked to outer space. Peaceful uses of outer space offer a bright prospect for the progress of human civilization. However, the shadow of weaponization of outer space is looming large. We must set to work urgently to ensure peaceful uses of outer space and to prevent it from becoming a new battlefield.

While looking back with regret at the historical mistakes of the cold war in competing for nuclear advantage, we should be wise enough to avoid repeating the same mistakes and to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. This is an issue where the world peace and the long-term interest of all countries are at stake. It is encouraging to note that this issue is drawing increasing attention from the international community as demonstrated by the UN General Assembly resolutions adopted for many consecutive years and NGOs seminars devoted to this issue.

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on PAROS and start substantive work with a view to negotiating and concluding an international legal instrument on preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space at an early date. For this purpose, China together with Russia and some other countries, submitted to the CD a working paper titled Possible Elements for a Future International Legal Agreement on the Prevention of the Deployment of Weapons in Outer Space, and the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects (CD/1679) in June this year. This working paper is also circulated as an official document of the current session of UNGA (A/57/418). We would like
to register our gratitude to the countries concerned for their useful comments and suggestions, and will continue to conduct serious and earnest discussions on this issue with all parties, further drawing on their views and suggestions to improve and enrich the above-mentioned document.

Mr. Chairman,

China always strictly and faithfully fulfills its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and actively supports and participates in the work of the OPCW. We would like to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter on his assumption of the Director-General of the OPCW. We believe that, under the leadership of Ambassador Pfirter, the OPCW will pass this transitional period smoothly, get back on track and make new progress in the implementation of the Convention. China is ready to work with other member states for the comprehensive and effective implementation of the convention and the smooth operation of the OPCW.

With the joint efforts of China and Japan, progress has been made last year in the disposal of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the Chinese territory. We hope that the substantive destruction process will start as soon as possible so that the grave threat posed by these weapons to the local environment and the lives and property of the local people can be eliminated within the time-frame set forth in the Convention.

China has supported and actively participated in the negotiation of the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We deeply regret that the protocol failed to come to fruition as expected. In the current situation, it is particularly important to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention. Therefore, China welcomes and is willing to discuss within the multilateral framework any suggestions and measures aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention. As the resumed session of the Fifth BWC Review Conference is approaching, China wishes to work with other parties in a constructive manner to seek consensus on the specific mechanism and measures for strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention, so that the conference could achieve concrete results.

China consistently supports the international efforts to address the illicit trade in small arms. The Programme of Action adopted by the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the conclusion of Firearms Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes represent major steps by the international community in this connection. It is of great significance to fully implement the Programme of Action and to facilitate the early entry into force of the Firearms Protocol. We are pleased that the UN Governmental Experts Group on Small Arms is currently examining the issue of identification and tracing of illegal small arms. We hope their efforts will produce positive results. China always attaches great importance to the control of the production of and trade in small arms. We are now faithfully implementing the relevant measures contained in the Programme of Action and looking into the issue of signing the Firearms Protocol.
China supports international efforts to strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We welcome the successful conclusion of the Second CCW Review Conference at the end of last year. We also welcome the decisions adopted at the conference to amend Article I of the Convention by expanding the scope of application of the CCW and to establish a group of governmental experts (GGE) to further explore the issues such as explosive remnants of war (ERW). After two sessions of the GGE this year, parties are converging on some aspects of the ERW issue. China wishes to join hands with other states parties to move this process forward.

In recent years, China has been actively engaged in international de-mining assistance and has achieved good results. In 2002, China has earmarked about 3 million US dollars for international de-mining cooperation, which is mainly used for mine clearance assistance to Eritrea and Lebanon. Besides providing the two countries with de-mining equipment, we have also sent an expert group to Eritrea to train local de-mining operators. China will continue with international de-mining assistance within its capacity. We are also willing to cooperate with other states and international organizations to make contributions to the strengthening of international de-mining efforts.

To conduct various forms of exchanges and cooperation helps enhance mutual trust, eliminate suspicions, broaden common grounds and promote the course of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, we highly appreciate the fruitful work by the UN in recent years. China attaches importance and actively devotes itself to the dialogue and cooperation in the field of arms control and disarmament. In recent years, we have been conducting fruitful consultations with many countries. Last April, China and the UN co-sponsored an international conference "A Disarmament Agenda for the 21st Century". The UN Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, senior government officials from more than twenty countries and NGO representatives attended the conference. They conducted in-depth discussions and put forward useful suggestions on such important issues as nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space, missile non-proliferation and the role of UN in disarmament field. A booklet containing the summary of the conference and statements made will shortly be published by the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Chairman,

After decades of unremitting efforts, the international community has established a relatively complete international arms control and disarmament legal system, which has become an important and stabilizing factor in the global security architecture. Under the current situation, this system has an even more important role to play. Therefore, to preserve this legal system and to further promote the course of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation serves the common interests of all states and is also their shared responsibility. China will join other countries in their efforts towards this objective.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.