Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I am confident that under your able stewardship, the Committee will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey perceives the arms control and disarmament process as a significant dimension of her national security policy. As a corollary, we attach great importance to fulfilling the obligations emanating from international agreements and arrangements. We are committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. This goal should be pursued realistically through a balanced approach encompassing steps relating both to nuclear and conventional arms.

Mr. Chairman,

In the field of conventional arms control, Turkey attaches utmost importance to the CFE Treaty which continues to play a vital role in the European security architecture and makes an indispensable contribution to security and stability in its area of application and beyond.

Mindful of the serious threat posed to international peace and security by the illicit trade of small arms and of the destabilizing impact caused by the illegal transfer of such weapons on a regional level, Turkey actively participates in the efforts to control small arms and light weapons. The present challenge is the implementation of the Programme of Action.

We believe that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in New York in July 2001 provided a good opportunity to
consider effective ways of combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons.

Hence, Turkey took great interest in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and contributed to related discussions within other UN bodies. For more effective international control, Turkey encourages transparency in the transfer of conventional weapons. In this context, she advocates the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include small arms and light weapons categories. Turkey also supports similar initiatives under the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement and the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the hopes for a safer environment brought about by the end of the cold war, the world experienced a proliferation of regional conflicts and armed hostilities and witnessed a trend leading to the spread and destabilizing accumulation of sophisticated weapons systems including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery means.

The proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery are a tangible and growing threat facing our nations. Despite efforts by the international community to devise comprehensive and effective arms control and disarmament measures, some countries, albeit few, still continue to improve and/or seek to acquire nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons and their related technologies.

The progressive improvements in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles on the other hand, render the threat of proliferation all the more worrying, since they make the WMD readily usable. The Middle East and North Africa are home to highest concentration of NBC weapons and missile programs compared with any other region in the world. In order to understand the rationale behind this high level proliferation in the Middle East, it would be worthwhile to look at the root causes of the problem from a wider perspective.

Any credible effort aimed at finding a lasting solution to the problem of proliferation in the Middle East must first and foremost address the issue of eradicating all WMD in the region. We believe that arms control agreements and non-proliferation regimes will continue to restrain the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

We are all aware that many of the technologies associated with WMD programs also have legitimate civilian or military applications. As dual-use technology and expertise continue to spread internationally, the prospects for nuclear, biological and chemical terrorism are also growing. The relative ease with which such weapons are produced, coupled with the willingness of some states to co-operate with terrorist, extremist or organized crime groups increase our concern to see especially chemical and biological weapons ending-up in unwanted hands. We observe with concern the ongoing transfers of WMD and related material and technology. If this trend continues, the primary customers of these materials might themselves become the suppliers for possible other proliferators over the next decade.
Therefore, we also believe in the necessity of extreme vigilance in the transfers of sensitive material and technology to the regions, which are of particular concern, such as, the Middle East. While the main responsibility for effective international cooperation for the prevention of proliferation lies mainly with supplier countries, countries located on the routes of transfer should as well shoulder their responsibility and cooperate with the suppliers to prevent unauthorized access to these materials and technologies.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community is not only being challenged by the risks brought about by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction but also by their means of delivery. In a precarious geography, the proliferation of ballistic missiles, with destabilizing consequences, is of particular concern for Turkey. We see an urgent need for a global and multilateral approach to intensify existing efforts against ballistic missiles proliferation. Turkey strongly supports the process of universalization of the International Code of Conduct against ballistic missiles proliferation and we are looking forward to the ICOC launching conference in the Hague in November this year.

Mr. Chairman,

It is Turkey’s desire to see, in our region and beyond, that all countries come to share the goals of non-proliferation and work collectively towards their achievement. After establishing at the national level the necessary export control regulations, Turkey joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group and became a member of the Australian Group. Turkey has also assumed its responsibilities in the Wassenaar arrangement and Missile Technology Control Regime and joined the Zangger Committee. These complement the commitments that we have undertaken by virtue of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

As a further manifestation of our non-proliferation policies, we became one of the first signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Turkey is among the 44 countries whose ratifications are required for the entry into force of the CTBT. Being fully aware of this special responsibility conferred on us in the service of international non-proliferation efforts, we have done our best for the early ratification of the Treaty. The ratification process was completed and the instrument of ratification has been deposited with the UN Secretary General in 2000.

The effective implementation of the CTBT will certainly be beneficial to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to its pillar, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a landmark of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Turkey, therefore, supports all efforts aimed at bringing the Treaty into force at the earliest date. In this context, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs took part at the launching of the joint ministerial statement on the CTBT on 14 September 2002, here at the United Nations. Now, taking this opportunity, we would like to once again, renew our call to all nations, which have not done so, to sign and ratify CTBT at the earliest possible date.
Mr. Chairman,

The NPT, which establishes a global norm of nuclear non-proliferation with its 187 States Parties, is one of the most remarkable Treaties of all times. The indefinite extension of the Treaty made it a permanent feature of the global security edifice. Turkey has all along been an ardent supporter of the NPT and its lofty goals. We strictly abide by the provisions of the Treaty. The NPT 2000 Review Conference held in New York offered the first opportunity to consider in detail the operation of the Treaty since its indefinite extension.

Turkey participated constructively in the preparations for the NPT review process which took place in the spring of this year with a view to ensuring the success of the Review Conference in 2005.

We welcome the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions and the Joint Declaration by President Bush and President Putin on the New Strategic Relationship between these two countries and we see this Treaty as a step forward to the efforts of international community in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

The creation of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, on the basis of arrangements concluded freely between States in their respective regions will strengthen global as well as regional peace and security. Turkey will continue to support the establishment of such zones wherever possible and feasible.

In this context, we are pleased that the negotiations on the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty have almost been concluded. We are looking forward to the singing of this Treaty in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey always places a special emphasis on and supports the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) strengthening the non-proliferation regime and the verification mechanisms. We believe that IAEA safeguards play a key role in the nuclear non-proliferation regime and their universal application is of paramount importance.

Effective IAEA safeguards are needed to prevent the use of nuclear material for prohibited purposes. Likewise, effective safeguards are also needed for facilitating cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy without risk of diversion to prohibited activities and uses.

In this context, Turkey supports the measures to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system. Turkey, herself, has concluded and implements the Additional Protocol with the IAEA for this purpose. However, the overall progress on the number of states concluding and implementing the Additional Protocols leaves much to be desired. In this regard, we would like to echo the resolution adopted at the 46th. General Conference of the IAEA
and urge all States which have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements, to do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey believes that the CD must retain its role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. However, the lack of progress in the CD for the last four years, has been a major cause of disappointment for us. We believe that we should avoid creating the wrong impression that the CD is becoming an ineffective body.

We had hoped that the positive outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference would be a source of inspiration at the beginning of the 2001 session. However, our hopes were not realized due to some divergent views on how to set out CD’s work program. It is a fact that the CD can easily become hostage to dynamics of the outside world. And there are times when the CD cannot keep up with the pace of changes that unfold in the international arena either. This was the case when the international community was unable to benefit fully from the propitious environment that the end of the Cold War provided. The reality of today is such that the key players, perhaps with the best of all intentions, continue to pursue diverging means for the same end, that is to enhance global security and stability in the post-Cold War era.

Turkey is fully committed to CD’s unique role and thinks that the Conference should do its utmost to be responsive to present as well as future dangers. We sincerely hope that with new initiatives and efforts the atmosphere of convergence would prevail over divergence and the current stalemate on the work programme of the CD would be circumvented.

Mr. Chairman,

The Chemical Weapons Convention is unique in its kind with its provisions aimed at prohibiting and eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international verification and control. Since its entry into force, the growth in the number of the States party to the convention is encouraging. Turkey has been party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) since 1997 and is firmly committed to its objectives. We have made the necessary adaptation in our national legislation to meet the requirements of the convention. We also try to encourage other countries, especially those in our neighbourhood which have not yet signed or ratified the CWC, to become party to it. Turkey is determined to continue her efforts in the future towards ensuring the non-proliferation of such weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) represents a key instrument to prevent biological toxic materials from being used as weapons. The recent bio-terrorism which emerged in the form of anthrax attacks are clear indications of the need for resolute action against biological weapons as well. There is no doubt that we have to approach the BTWC with a new vigor and renewed sense of urgency. We attach utmost importance to the work of strengthening the verification of inspection mechanisms. I think it is high time to make every effort to establish a multilaterally negotiated compliance and verification mechanism. We also have to be vigilant about its universality and effective implementation.
The 5th review conference of the States Parties to the BTWC, which will resume its work on November 11th of this year, is yet another opportunity to reinforce the multilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope for the successful outcome of the review conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Another important progress has been registered against the use of anti-personnel landmines (APMS). With a concerted effort of the States and the NGOs now 143 countries are states parties to the Ottawa Convention.

Turkey is fully conscious of the human sufferings and the casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. The security situation around Turkey precluded her from signing the Convention at the time of its conclusion. Nevertheless as an expression of her commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, Turkey extended her national moratorium on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines indefinitely in March of this year and concluded several bilateral agreements with neighboring countries with a view to establishing regimes for keeping the common borders free from these mines.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year I announced at this Committee my Government’s firm decision to become a party to the Convention. Our intention to this effect has already been made public on 6th April 2001, during the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, to Turkey. On that occasion the Foreign Ministers of both countries decided that Turkey and Greece would simultaneously deposit the instruments of ratification with the Secretary General of the United Nations following the completion of their respective constitutional procedures.

At this juncture, I would like to report that the Convention has been submitted to the Turkish Parliament for ratification. On May 9th of this year the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament has endorsed the Convention and conveyed it to the General Assembly for final approval.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.