Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you, at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We extend our congratulations also to the members of the Bureau. Your experience and skills will, no doubt, lead us to a successful completion of the Committee’s deliberations at the current session.

Mr. Chairman,

The maintenance of international peace and security acquired a new meaning in the wake of the tragedy of 11 September 2001 and the subsequently launched comprehensive international campaign against terrorism. Those tragic events demonstrated that international terrorism stepped outside national boundaries and that it poses a global threat to international peace and security.

Multilateral action, centred within the United Nations system can provide the only workable response to this threat. However, such an approach, to be effective, has to have concrete follow-up at regional and bilateral levels.

With this in mind, Yugoslavia has placed combat against terrorism and related problems of organized crime and illegal migration high among its priorities. We pay particular attention to these issues within the South Eastern European Cooperation Process which Yugoslavia is chairing this year.
Mr. Chairman,

The agenda of the current session of the First Committee is again very comprehensive, reflecting a wide range of issues relevant to UN disarmament efforts. In particular, I would like to point out some of those issues.

One of the most important foreign policy goals of my country is the strengthening of regional stability and security which implies the promotion of good-neighbourly relations with all States in our region, based on the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the OSCE documents, above all the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity and equality among States. We consider that the respect of those principles, coupled with the strengthening of regional cooperation, will significantly contribute to the security in Europe and international security at large. In that context, we actively support and implement the Agreement on sub-regional arms control, concluded in Florence in 1996, on the basis of Article IV, Annex I-B of the Dayton/Paris Agreement. Furthermore, we also support the Macedonian initiative within the First Committee, entitled “Maintenance of international security – good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South Eastern Europe”. We hope that the resolution under this agenda item will be adopted by consensus this year again. My country also supports the initiatives contained in the resolution entitled “Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region”.

Yugoslavia also attaches special attention to the issue of small arms and light weapons. In that context, on 8 May 2002, a Regional Clearing House for Elimination of Small Arms and Light Weapons was established in Belgrade, as a project of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe within the UNDP Office. The purpose of its establishment was to harmonize regionally the relevant regulations in the field of production, trade and stockpiling of this type of weapons, in view of the fact that they are most commonly used in the acts of organized crime and terrorism. Moreover, the Center should promote regional cooperation in the field of preventing illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons. My country supports all documents adopted by the OSCE and EU related to this type of weapons on a voluntary basis, last year Yugoslavia destroyed a large quantity of those weapons. In order to contribute to the resolution of the problem of small arms and light weapons, we extend our support to resolutions entitled “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures” and “Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”.

Mr. Chairman,

Yugoslavia duly honours its obligations assumed internationally in the field of disarmament. As of 2001, it has been submitting its reports to the UN Register on conventional arms and has provided information on its defence expenditures, on the basis of the GA resolution on transparency in armament, which my country supports. At the Second Review Conference on Implementation of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Yugoslavia supported amendments to Article 1 of the Convention, as well as the establishment of a Working group of Government experts with a mandate to discuss the issue of Explosive Remnants
of War except anti-personnel land mines. Within this Committee, we support the resolution which has been adopted by consensus for years.

Moreover, Yugoslavia signed the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines. We took part in the fourth meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, held in Geneva in September 2002 and support fully the conclusions adopted at the meeting. As one of the States experiencing extremely harmful consequences of the use of this type of weapons, Yugoslavia has actively joined the international efforts aimed at eliminating these weapons. In that connection, we support resolution “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and On Their Destruction”. Furthermore, earlier this year, Yugoslavia established the Center for elimination of mines and other unexploded ordnance.

As for the Chemical Weapons Convention, Yugoslavia regularly submits reports on the implementation of the Convention and has received visits by the weapons inspectors of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Early this month, my Government signed two agreements with the Organization on inspection sites in the country.

Yugoslavia expects that the resumed session of the Fifth Review Conference for implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, scheduled for November this year in Geneva, will be brought to a successful conclusion.

Yugoslavia attaches great importance to the issue of non-proliferation, particularly of weapons of mass destruction. As a State Party to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Yugoslavia supports the preparatory process for the holding of the 2005 NPT Review Conference which we expect to contribute to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. Also, we hope that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty will enter into force as soon as possible. In our view, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are the preconditions for long-lasting global stability.

In the process of preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the UN should play a crucial role since the proliferation of this type of weapons may endanger all achievements and values of human kind and undermine the very foundations of international stability and security. In that connection, the UN needs to establish the ways and methods which could contribute to the strengthening of non-proliferation process.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure you that the Yugoslav delegation stands ready to extend its support and make its full contribution to the work of this Committee at this session.

Thank you.