Mr Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. My delegation looks forward to working with you. I would also like to welcome Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative and Head of the Office of Disarmament Affairs. Finally, Singapore would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Ambassador Marty Natalegawa from Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and with the statement delivered by the representative from Myanmar, on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr Chairman,

All countries desire security. Together with sustainable development and respect for human rights, this is one of the fundamental pillars upon which the UN is built. The First Committee has been entrusted with an important duty – deliberating and adopting resolutions pertaining to disarmament and international security.

As Ambassador Duarte eloquently stated, humanity as a whole continues to live in insecurity under the threat of nuclear weapons. We must recognise that no progress can be made if nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are regarded as competing priorities. In fact, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are inextricably linked. Both disarmament and non-proliferation serve the interest of both nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states.

Earlier this year, a smuggler was arrested in Georgia. He was carrying nuclear bomb-grade uranium. I raise this example to highlight that the risk of nuclear terrorism is real. It is something we all need to work together to combat. And like nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons also pose a serious danger. We must remain vigilant against these threats as the knowledge to produce such weapons becomes increasingly easy to obtain from the internet.
This threat is particularly salient for a small country with an open economy like Singapore. Because we are so connected to the world through trade and transport links, we are particularly vulnerable to attacks. We are also vulnerable to shocks to the global economy. Therefore, Singapore has consistently supported multilateral non-proliferation instruments that serve the interests of international security and stability. This includes the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological Weapons Convention. In 2003, Singapore became the first operational Container Security Initiative port in Asia, and joined the Proliferation Security Initiative as a core participant. In 2005, we became the first port in Southeast Asia to take part in the Megaports Initiative.

Mr Chairman,

In the Millennium Report of the Secretary General, then Secretary General Kofi Annan said that small arms could be described as weapons of mass destruction because of the number of fatalities that they caused. Clearly, the illicit trade in conventional weapons is a scourge we must deal with. We continue to support the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Mr Chairman,

Disarmament and non-proliferation require a multilateral approach based on the rule of law. Treaties and conventions, especially those related to nuclear weapons, must see progress to remain credible. This progress cannot only be in conferences and committees, but also in the concrete implementation of commitments. In addition, they must be universal to be fully effective.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are challenges that can only be overcome by the nations of the world acting together. Here, the UN has a central role to play since no other body possesses the same international legitimacy. There is common ground that we should try to build on. My delegation expresses our hope and confidence that, under your able leadership, this committee will be able to work purposefully forward. Thank you.