Mr. Chairman,

We highlighted the main elements of Turkey’s position on nuclear weapons at the general debate last week. Today I will further elaborate on various aspects of our position in this area.

Turkey, like many others, regards the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and is determined to uphold the viability of the Treaty. Turkey recognizes that full and universal implementation of the Treaty offers a unique contribution to international peace and security. We remain fully committed to the implementation of the Treaty with all its three mutually-reinforcing pillars; namely non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.

We have been advocating a balanced treatment of these pillars. We are pleased to observe that this approach has gained increased support over the years. However, there is still a need to further bolster the integrity and credibility of the NPT regime through a universal recognition of the importance of the equal treatment of these three dimensions.

We underline the essential and unique role of the IAEA in verifying States’ nuclear non-proliferation commitments and in ensuring development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy by those countries aspiring to develop their capacities in this field. Hence, we are dedicated to full compliance with the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards and the Additional Protocols, which in our view constitute the current verification standards. And we call upon all States Parties which have not done so, to ratify and implement without delay these instruments.

Mr. Chairman,

Among the three pillars of the NPT, nuclear disarmament requires an incremental but sustained approach. The unequivocal undertaking by all nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals is one of the greatest achievements of the NPT. This responsibility must now be upheld and operationalized, building on Article VI of the Treaty and the 13 Practical Steps for Nuclear Disarmament agreed upon in 2000. In this context, we welcome the steps nuclear-weapon States have taken so far to reduce their nuclear arsenals. In particular, we welcome and encourage the efforts aimed towards replacing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with a new legally-binding instrument by the end of this year.

We would like hereby to recall the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency. We believe that irreversible progress on nuclear disarmament will also reinforce the other two pillars of the NPT. In particular, nuclear non-proliferation should go hand in hand with nuclear disarmament. Nuclear non-proliferation is essential for maintaining international peace and security and an indispensable step for achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. With this understanding, Turkey continues to call for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and initiation of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty within the context of the Conference on Disarmament, while also advocating the strengthening of the safeguards system of the IAEA and promoting the Agency’s role in advancing safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology. We also urge all States to implement resolution 1540 and the subsequent resolutions of the Security Council on non-proliferation.
It is our firm belief that States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations should enjoy unfettered access to civilian nuclear technology as provided for in the NPT and the Statute of the IAEA. In our view, this would only contribute to the further strengthening and universalization of the NPT regime. Having said that, we must also ensure that all requisite steps are taken to ensure that there will be no diversion of peaceful nuclear programs to military sphere. In that sense, the right to have access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes entails a strict responsibility and obligation on the part of every NPT State Party for non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

We are encouraged by the positive and constructive atmosphere that prevailed in the NPT Preparatory Committee earlier this year and earnestly hope that the 2010 Review Conference will also lead to a successful outcome. Turkey will continue to work constructively towards this end. The commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and a follow-up to the START-1 could contribute to the success of the Review Conference next year.

Mr. Chairman,

Our conviction is that nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction cannot provide additional security for any country in this era. On the contrary, the possession of and the pursuit for such weapons undermines regional security and stability. Turkey therefore attaches great significance to and endorses all meaningful steps for the establishment of effectively verifiable zones free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, particularly in the Middle East. Turkey is also convinced that legally binding security assurances provided by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear weapon States would strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We consider the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula as a regional and global priority. As the current Chair of the DPRK Sanctions Committee in the Security Council, we attach utmost importance to full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874. Turkey hopes that conditions can be created for the DPRK to return to the NPT at the earliest possible date as a non-nuclear weapon State and for the resumption by the IAEA of comprehensive safeguards. By the same token, we are committed to a negotiated solution and recognize the importance of encouraging the DPRK to return to the Six Party Talks, which we consider as the best vehicle for a concrete and irreversible progress towards lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

Treaty-based nuclear arms control and non-proliferation is indispensable for promoting international peace and security. We call on all parties to renew and reaffirm their commitments to the principles and objectives of these instruments and redouble their efforts towards codification of new instruments, so that future generations can enjoy a greater sense of safety and security around the globe.

Thank you.