Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Serbian delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in your important work.

Serbia has aligned itself with the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union; nonetheless, I shall address some of the priorities from Serbia’s point of view, and some activities it has pursued in connection with various topics on our agenda.

We share the conviction that risks from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the growing danger of non-State actors, especially terrorist groups and individuals, acquiring this type of weapons constitute one of the major threats to international peace and security. In that regard, we welcome the holding of the UN Security Council Summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament on 24 September 2009, which reaffirmed the belief that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime should be strengthened to ensure its effective implementation.

Serbia has acceded to all major international agreements in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control and is committed to a full and consistent implementation of the obligations it has assumed. Moreover, in order to make a full contribution to the relevant United Nations activities, last April my country submitted its candidature for membership in the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We believe that the progress achieved in its work this year could also facilitate the opening of the discussion on the expansion of its membership, thus enabling the applicant States to become members of the Conference soon.

My country supports the commitments and concrete activities of the United Nations and other international actors aimed at establishing effective measures and instruments that would strengthen, long-term, the international regime of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, we attach great importance to the fulfillment of the obligations under UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), including submission of annual reports on the activities to implement it.
As a responsible member of the international community, Serbia is fully committed to a consistent implementation of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On the national level, we have taken comprehensive measures for the implementation of this Treaty.

Serbia considers the preparations for the forthcoming NPT Review Conference as an opportunity to make progress in all three pillars of the Treaty: non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and disarmament. We welcome the results of the Preparatory Committee, which we believe provide a solid basis to achieve success at the Conference.

During the visit of Mr. Mohamed El Baradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to my country last July, the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement was signed completing the implementation of Serbia’s obligations within the legal framework of the NPT. In addition, Serbia has adopted the Law on Protection against Ionizing Radiation and on Nuclear Security which provides for the establishment of an independent regulatory agency for protection against ionizing radiation and nuclear security and standardizes measures for protection of lives and health of people, as well as for environmental protection against harmful effects of ionizing radiation.

Serbia cooperates very actively with the IAEA. During the 53rd General Conference of the Agency in Vienna, an agreement was signed by the Russian Federation, USA, EU and IAEA, providing for the allocation of US$14 million to the “VIND” project on the transfer of spent nuclear fuel from the Vinca Institute of Nuclear Science presenting a potential ecological threat.

My country attaches special importance to a full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Last August, the Serbian Parliament adopted a new Law on the Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and ratified the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Cooperation with OPCW and its member States evolves in many areas, especially in the organization of international seminars on assistance and protection against chemical weapons and in the training of personnel in Serbian institutions in the field of toxicology.

Furthermore, the Law on the Implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, one of the major instruments within the national mechanism for preventing proliferation of this type of weapons, is expected to be adopted in Parliament soon. The procedure for waiving the reservation on the 1925 Geneva Protocol is also under way.

In view of the importance of the fight against new security challenges, Serbia has started, with other countries of the Western Balkans, the Implementation Programme against Proliferation and CBRNe Terrorism (IPACT). We are ready to give it our full contribution in terms of offering our capacities and expertise, but the success of IPACT will depend, in large measure, on the assistance, including financial assistance, by the European Union and other interested states and stakeholders.

Serbia supports all UN activities aimed at ensuring early entry of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), one of the pillars of the international regime of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, into force.
Serbia is resolved to honour its obligations in the field of disarmament. To that end, we are working on the fulfilment of our remaining obligations under the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines and believe that, with the assistance of international donors, we shall achieve our goal of de-mining, until the end of the year, of the mine fields in the border area with Croatia and entering 2010 without anti-personnel mines in our territory.

Along with other Parties, Serbia continues to implement the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control (Article IV, Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords) and, through new projects, has made a contribution to the implementation quality. The Parties to the Agreement are faced with a new challenge: to continue the Agreement ownership transfer process with the assistance of the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. It is hoped that the Parties will take over the Agreement ownership in the foreseeable future, even though we may have a need for the assistance of the Personal Representative for some time yet.

In order to improve its legislation and procedures in the field of arms export control, Serbia has submitted a request for regulating its membership in the Wassenaar Arrangement and intends also to submit a request for membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group soon. Serbia is resolved to contribute fully to the fight against international terrorism. We established an effective regime of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods export control and improved border and customs control measures.

As one of about 40 States that have submitted timely reports to the Secretary-General on the implementation of UNGA resolution 61/89 (2006), Serbia welcomes the progress achieved in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group on the commencement of the negotiations on Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) preparations and its eventual adoption.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by drawing the Committee’s attention to the new security risks posed to our region by the formation of the illegal Kosovo Security Force. The formation of the Force runs counter to UNSC resolution 1244 (1999) and threatens the national security of Serbia, as well as regional peace and security. In view of its symbolism as an attribute of State, the Kosovo Security Force violates Resolution 1244 which is governing the status of Kosovo at present. From the military and security point of view, the threat is not significant at this moment, but it may become so as it is intended to become the nucleus of the armed forces of independent Kosovo. Besides, it is a contributory factor of mistrust, fear and insecurity for the non-Albanians and a potential catalyst of their exodus from the province. Last but not least, the formation of the Force is tantamount to a steady re-armament of the southern Serbian province contrary to Serbia’s declared policy of demilitarization since 1999 in accordance with UNSC resolution 1244 (1999).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.