STATEMENT

by Mr. Ogtay Ismayil-Zada, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN at the thematic discussion: “Regional disarmament and security” of the First Committee of the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 21 October, 2010.

Mr. Chairman.

Azerbaijan joins other delegations in congratulating you on your election as a Chairman of the First Committee. We also congratulate other members of bureau on their well-deserved election.

Azerbaijan recognizes the vital role of the First Committee in maintaining international, sub-regional and regional peace and security. We attach serious attention to joint efforts in addressing regional and global issues, with particular focus on regional security, combating terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring energy security. We strongly advocate the region of South Caucasus and beyond free from weapons of mass destruction.

The security of each State, and more broadly, the international and regional peace and security depends on whether States observe the norms and principles of international law and use them as a guiding tool for shaping their foreign and security policies. Unfortunately, unlawful use of force is still not removed from the context of international and regional relations. Today civilian populations are suffering in many places worldwide due to the manifest failure of individual States to fulfill their most basic and compelling responsibilities. Armed conflicts, military aggressions and
foreign occupations involving the most serious international crimes, are only a few vivid examples from our recent history of the bitter consequences of noncompliance by individual States with the norms and principles of international law.

Mr. Chairman.

The regional disarmament and security play a vital role in establishing peace in conflict situations. Unfortunately, unresolved conflicts in many instances become a source of concentration of uncontrolled arms as well as provide fertile ground for transnational organized crime and other illegal activities.

The most vivid example of misconduct of the norms and principles of international law is almost two decades long and still unresolved Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict which represents one of the major threats to international and regional peace and security. The conflict has resulted in the occupation of almost one fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan and has made approximately one out of every nine persons in my country an internally displaced or refugee. The most serious international offenses, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, were committed in the course of this conflict.

It has been internationally recognized that Armenia bears the primary responsibility for occupying Azerbaijan's territories, committing the most serious international crimes during the conflict, carrying out ethnic cleansing and creation of a mono-ethnic culture in the captured Azerbaijani territories.

Mr. Chairman.

Despite ongoing political efforts towards the earliest resolution of the conflict, military activities in the occupied areas of Azerbaijan are in gross violation with international law and serve to further consolidation of the current status-quo of the occupation, securing the results of ethnic cleansing and colonization of the captured territories, as well as cause serious obstruction to the peaceful solution of the conflict.
Armenia intensively builds up its military presence and capability in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The available data indicates that since the occupation the numbers of unaccounted for and uncontrolled arms in these territories have consistently increased.

We are seriously concerned *inter alia* by the fact that the conventional arms control mechanism is not effective in these territories. Accumulation of a great number of armaments and ammunitions therein, beyond the international control, poses serious threats to regional peace and security. In this context, we regret that the international community, especially those mediating the negotiation process, shows certain indifference to this problem which in fact negatively affects the perspectives of the soonest peaceful resolution of the conflict. Our particular concern relates to the possibility of use by terrorist groups of specific weapons, including the individual anti-aircraft missile systems.

In this regard we deem it necessary to take more efficient measures aimed at preventing those who are in effective military and political control of occupied territories from acquiring conventional weapons, as well as to disclose their attempts to deny responsibility.

Mr. Chairman.

It is curious that the statements of Armenian officials are full of accusations towards Azerbaijan about its allegedly militaristic intentions and armaments race. The Armenians are stirring hysteria about the rapid development of Azerbaijan. We understand the true reason of Armenia's misinterpretation launched in all international forums. The purpose is to create a smokescreen of its intentions in the occupied territories and to win time.

As for increasing military budget, Armenia omits to say that annual defense spending of Azerbaijan remains in line with overall budget increases, that Azerbaijan continues to spend a much smaller percentage of
its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the army than Armenia and that the size of the armed forces of Azerbaijan is proportional to its population, territory and length of borders and remains less than Armenia’s. It is worthwhile mentioning that President of Armenia Serj Sargsyan stated on 25 May 2010 during his visit to NATO Headquarters that “The Armenian army has types of ammunition that countries, ten times the size of Armenia, would dream of having”. These words are self-explanatory.

It is not accidental that Armenia’s military expenditures in GDP calculations take one of the highest rates in the world. That is why Armenia, which implementing illegal military projects to supply its armed forces, is continuing to be a threat for the stability and security in our region.

Mr. Chairman.

As a country suffering from the devastation of war and occupation, Azerbaijan strongly believes that faithful observance of the worldwide accepted norms and principles of international law concerning good neighborhood, friendly relations and cooperation among States and the fulfillment in good faith of the obligations assumed by States are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international and regional peace and security.

The strategy of Azerbaijan is aimed at the liberation of the all occupied territories and thus restoration of the State’s territorial integrity, the return of forcibly displaced population to their homes, and the establishment of durable peace and stability in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, as well as in the entire South Caucasus.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I want to declare that as long as Armenia continues to follow its aggressive policy, any talks about peace, stability and all-inclusive cooperation in the region are irrelevant. First of all, Armenia should ask herself about the reasons of such a situation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.