STATEMENT BY

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GENERAL DEBATE OF
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Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by joining the previous speakers in congratulating you and other members of the bureau on your well-deserved election. We are confident that the First Committee will successfully complete its deliberations under your able stewardship.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey attaches great significance to global, overall disarmament and continues to support all efforts aimed at enhancing international security and stability through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Turkey is a party to all major international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes and we wish to see the universalization, effective and coordinated implementation as well as further strengthening of these measures. We therefore lend our full support to the revitalization of the international disarmament agenda through coordinated efforts. We would like the United Nations to play a more effective and influential role in this field.

Turkey shares the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and supports working towards this goal within the framework established by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This is a well-balanced framework consisting of three complementary and mutually-reinforcing pillars, namely nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Turkey believes that an equal and balanced treatment of these three pillars will reinforce the integrity and credibility of the NPT regime.

We are pleased that the 2010 NPT Review Conference was able to adopt by consensus a comprehensive Final Document that contains far-reaching recommendations for concrete action aimed at making progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Now is the time to follow through our joint commitments. On 22 September 2010, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu attended a high-level meeting in New York with the participation of a number of like-minded countries that are committed to the realization of the consensus outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference. The participants of the meeting belonged to different geographies, cultures and alliances, but shared the same vision; that is, the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Taking this opportunity, we call on all UN Member States to join forces with us to make this vision a reality.

Mr. Chairman,

We acknowledge the international safeguards system of the IAEA as the fundamental tool in global non-proliferation efforts. In this context, Turkey recognizes the need for further strengthening and universalization of the Agency’s verification authority. We regard the comprehensive safeguards and the Additional Protocol of the IAEA as an indispensable verification standard. We call on all States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify and implement the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, as well as the IAEA Additional Protocol as soon as possible. We believe that the strengthening of the safeguards system of the IAEA and promoting the Agency’s role in advancing safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy are also essential for the sustainability of the NPT regime in the long run. It is our firm belief that States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology, as provided for in the NPT. 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 be taken so that there will be no diversion of nuclear programs from peaceful to military uses.
Turkey also attaches significance to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As President Abdullah Gül underlined on the occasion of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests on 29 August 2010, "the leaders of the world have to recognize the risk of a nuclear explosion and the value of the CTBT as one of the essential pillars of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We congratulate Indonesia for its decision to start the ratification process of the Treaty. We hope that this ratification will happen soon and will have a triggering effect for the ratification of the Treaty by the remaining Annex-II countries. We are also heartened by the revised approach of the new US Administration towards ratifying the Treaty. Turkey has been an active participant of Article XIV Conferences aimed at facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty and has assumed a key responsibility within its verification system by hosting a primary seismic station of the "International Monitoring System." We will continue to exert every effort to contribute to the entry into force of the Treaty, while also supporting the CTBT Organization both technically and financially.

We also commend the steps already taken by the NPT nuclear weapon States towards further reductions and transparency and hope that this momentum will be preserved. In this context, Turkey welcomes the new Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty (START) signed between the United States and the Russian Federation on 8 April 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our steadfast belief 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. We welcome, in this respect, the endorsement of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, by consensus, the convening a Conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

We look forward to the peaceful resolution of the current non-proliferation issues that are of common concern to the international community. In this vein, we attach importance to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and call on the DPRK to return to the Six Party Talks immediately and without condition. Turkey hopes that the DPRK abandons all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and ceases all related activities in a complete and irreversible manner under the verification of the IAEA and returns immediately to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state.

We also consider it important that the outstanding issues relating to Iran’s nuclear program be resolved through peaceful and diplomatic means without further delay. As a neighbour of Iran, Turkey will continue supporting and facilitating the diplomatic process on this issue.

As regards the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we support revitalizing the work of the Conference to resume its role as the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. We would like to express our appreciation to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for convening a high-level meeting on 24 September on the margins of the 65. UN General Assembly to this end. Various impediments standing in the way of the substantive work of the Conference should be dealt with in a constructive manner and by engaging the parties in order to alleviate legitimate concerns. Our common desire to revitalize the CD should be put to action so that a Program of
Work is agreed as soon as possible. Second-track initiatives or new formations, where the participation of all concerned parties is not granted, will fail to bring about the desired outcomes. We support the commencement of the negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and believe that launching the negotiations within the framework of the Shannon Mandate in such a way as to exclude the existing stockpiles should accommodate the concerns of individual Member States. Progress in this area could pave the way to parallel advances in related fields, including nuclear weapon free zones, negative security assurances and prevention of arms race in outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention are also important components of the global system against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Turkey does not possess any such weapons and reiterates its call for a wider adherence to and an effective implementation of these Conventions. We actively support the efforts to promote the implementation of these instruments in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the adjacent regions.

Proliferation of the means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction is another pressing issue that needs to be effectively addressed by the international community. Indeed, Turkey is concerned with the progressive increase in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles. Within this framework, we consider the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation as a practical step towards an internationally accepted legal framework in this field and wish to see the universalization of this endeavour.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery become all the more worrying in the context of terrorism. Hence, we fully support international efforts to prevent the acquisition and use by terrorists of such weapons and to enhance the safety and security of radioactive materials and sources. Utmost attention should be paid to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear material and other components of these weapons. We should devise new measures to combat illicit trade in sensitive nuclear equipment and technology. In this context, we call for adherence to and effective implementation of two important conventions, namely the Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Turkey continues to support the work of the Committee established pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which complements the international efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Likewise, we regard the Proliferation Security Initiative as an important scheme complementing the existing international mechanisms. In April 2010, Turkey also took part in the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington D.C. which has led to the reaffirmation of the commitments to strengthen nuclear security and reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism through effective national action and international cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

The threat of proliferation is not confined to weapons of mass destruction. Proliferation of conventional weapons is also a cause of concern for Turkey. Indeed, the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries. There is also a very well-documented relationship between the illicit trade in arms and terrorism. As a country
suffering from terrorism, Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the UN and other fora to foster international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, including through the establishment of effective norms and rules aimed at eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

In this regard, Turkey remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and continues to support the conclusion of an Arms Trade Treaty, which should halt unregulated and uncontrolled trade of conventional arms worldwide and establish common standards for their global trade.

Another worrying issue in the field of conventional weapons is the scourge of Anti-Personnel Land Mines. As a party to the Ottawa Convention since 2004, Turkey fully supports the efforts for the universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention and the vision of a world, free from anti-personnel mines. We continue to pursue the destruction process of the stockpiled anti-personnel land mines in the Turkish Munitions Disposal Facility with utmost care and diligence. Let me take this opportunity to once again appeal to the States which have not yet done so to accede to the Convention. Turkey has also been involved in the Oslo process on Cluster Munitions and actively participates in the ongoing work in the Governmental Experts Group on Cluster Munitions meetings within the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We share the humanitarian concern behind the international efforts to limit the use of cluster munitions.

Turkey also highly values and supports the role of the UN regional disarmament centers. We believe that these centers are instrumental in promoting the implementation of existing international disarmament and arms control norms at regional and sub-regional levels. We commend and support the activities carried out by these centers which encourage regional dialogue for furthering openness, transparency and confidence-building.

Mr. Chairman,

2010 has been a busy and productive year as far the disarmament and arms control issues are concerned. We are convinced that the current international environment and the new tide of multilateralism are conducive for making further progress. We stand ready to maintain and build upon this positive momentum and it is our sincere hope that the deliberations of the First Committee this year will contribute to this progress. I wish to conclude by assuring you of our delegation’s full support and cooperation in bringing this session to a successful conclusion.

Thank you.