Mr. Chairman,

The main motivation for disarmament is to prevent armed conflict and the human suffering caused by it, while guarding international stability. Accordingly, we must strike a balance between visionary goals and feasible, long-term measures. Initiatives in this context should be integrated within the context of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to ensure far-reaching compliance by all actors concerned – both States and non-State actors.

The decade-and-a-half old deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) can no longer continue to be disregarded. At the same time, we cannot simply put the CD aside as an ineffective procedural tool that can only start operating once we have reached a world without conflict. Therefore, we were pleased to see new momentum in 2010 and would like to stress our strong support for an early start of negotiations on the Fissile-Material Cut-Off Treaty as a point of departure for a feasible path to disarmament.

Disarmament has to be achieved in a lawful manner and needs to be embedded in an international law framework. Like many other States, we had hoped that this Assembly at its last session would set a deadline for the CD to achieve real progress. Twelve months have now passed, and no further progress has been made. It has become clear to us that the time has come to comprehensively reconsider the structure of the entire multilateral disarmament framework.
Last year, States were able to agree on an Action Plan on Nuclear Disarmament as part of the final outcome document of the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Implementation of this ambitious plan, agreed by consensus, should be a priority for all States, regardless of whether they possess nuclear weapons. In this context, we also call upon the remaining annex 2 States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a necessary building block to increase the level of confidence among States. In addition, we would like to underline the obligation of nuclear weapon States to consider the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapon systems.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will fill an important gap in the non-proliferation of weapons, which is long overdue. We have seen time and again how illegally-traded arms can intensify a conflict. Artificially enhanced social differences in combination with illegally acquired arms have led to the escalation of conflicts, especially in LDCs. These human catastrophes have to be prevented by not adding fuel to the fire, when it comes to the undocumented distribution of weapons. We welcome the 7+1+1 formula, incorporating Small Arms and Light Weapons as well as ammunitions and we are convinced that a strong regulation would not hinder legitimate trade opportunities, especially for LDCs, but rather strengthen their domestic stability.

Certainly, in negotiating an international instrument as important as the ATT, there should be every effort made to reach consensus. However, consensus must not be a barrier to progress. When we decide on the Rules of Procedure for the ATT conference later this year, let us not doom ourselves to failure by giving 193 States the right to veto.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the heavy burden that the various disarmament resolutions place on States that wish to report and submit their views to the Secretary General. Consequently, we encourage the UN to develop a consolidated reporting tool to align different initiatives and to make it easier, especially for smaller States, to be able to comply adequately and in due time.

Disarmament is one of the most vital tasks of the United Nations and stagnation cannot be in any party’s interest. I thank you.