At the outset could I convey the congratulations of my Government on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this year’s First Committee. My delegation looks forward to working with you and your team and you can be assured of our full support as you discharge your duties.

New Zealand will participate actively in the work of the Committee, including as current Co-ordinator of the New Agenda Coalition. We are also pleased to be a core co-sponsor of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty resolution under Mexico’s trusty co-ordinatorship and in partnership also with Australia.

Mr Chairman,

Conventional weapons have featured strongly in the course of this year with considerable focus on the elements and drafting for an Arms Trade Treaty; useful progress on universalisation and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and the injection of new momentum into the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) via the group of governmental experts (MGE) which met in May ahead of next year’s Programme Of Action Review Conference.

New Zealand is a strong supporter of the process underway which will see us adopt, next year, a global Arms Trade Treaty. We have no doubt that a comprehensive and legally-binding international treaty which establishes global standards for all transfers of conventional arms will enhance both international, as well as regional, stability and development.

An ATT may not be the panacea for all the problems which flow from the international supply and availability of illicit arms – but it is an essential element in efforts to resolve them.

We are grateful for the continuing guidance and skill of the Chair of the ATT process, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina, who has successfully captured in his text the increasingly convergent views of states. He has equipped us with an excellent basis to move forward at the final PrepCom in February and during the formal negotiation of the Treaty next July.

Next year’s review of the SALW Programme of Action represents an important opportunity to assess whether this framework – established in 2001 – is sufficient to deal with the threat that many colleagues here have described facing in their home regions. In some, the situation has clearly reached crisis point. This year’s MGE – which was chaired by New Zealand - has helped ensure that discussions at the RevCon are not divorced from the reality on the ground.

Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) has been advanced this year including through discussions which took place at the
Second Meeting of States Parties held in Beirut last month. The strong international reaction against the instances of cluster munitions use this year has demonstrated the stigmatisation which these weapons have now so widely attracted. It will be vital for all countries concerned by the human suffering caused by cluster munitions to continue working together to maintain the high humanitarian standards set in the CCM.

The impulse to place at the centre of our concerns the innocent victims of the use, production or trade in weapons, - whether they be cluster munitions, landmines, or SALW - is rightly a strong, and in our view, a growing one.

Mr Chairman,

It is with significant regret that my delegation once again finds itself reflecting on the contrast between the progress observable in the conventional armaments sphere and the ongoing stalemate that besets the UN's disarmament machinery.

My delegation is grateful for the efforts of the UN Secretary-General in trying to get the Conference on Disarmament back on track. As High Representative Duarte said here yesterday, “there is no substitute for the UN disarmament machinery as a venue for multilateral cooperation. It remains the world’s great ‘assembly line’ for the construction and maintenance of global disarmament norms”.

The lengthy paralysis in the CD remains highly disturbing to my delegation: it deprives the international community of the value of a ready-made forum for negotiating on key issues like nuclear disarmament and fissile material.

In stifling the possibilities for the concrete pursuit of these and other core issues, the Conference has jeopardised the role which the UN General Assembly entrusted to it as – in the language of SSOD1 - “a single multilateral negotiating forum”. We all know that it has not functioned as such a forum for over fifteen years now: nothing has been coming off the assembly line. And yet in large measure the “considerable and urgent work” that prompted the Conference’s creation in the first place continues to await the international community’s attention.

The General Assembly which created the CD must hold the Conference to better account. After such a long period of impasse, it is incumbent on this General Assembly now to take steps to ensure that negotiations on the topics on the Conference’s agenda commence without any further delay. If the CD itself cannot fulfil its mandate as a negotiating body, then the gravity of the issues in question demands that other ways are found to pursue negotiations.
I note, Mr Chair, that there have been some recent positive developments on matters relevant to the topics on the CD's agenda.

The entry into force of the New START Agreement between Russia and the United States is very pleasing. We look forward to seeing that Treaty implemented in full, and work commenced on follow-up measures.

Last year's NPT Review Conference usefully acknowledged the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would flow from any use of nuclear weapons.

The clear and comprehensive pathway agreed at the Review Conference for future efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world was also a source of satisfaction for New Zealand. But the Action Plan is not something simply to be admired. It must be implemented – and implemented in its entirety. All States Parties have a responsibility to do so, and we urge all to fulfil that responsibility without delay.

In this regard, we welcome the meetings recently held by the nuclear-weapon States in both Paris and Geneva to examine their undertakings and we look forward to learning more about this work in the coming period.

It will be important that the new NPT review cycle, starting with our meeting next year in Vienna, builds real momentum towards the 2015 Review Conference. We urge all Parties to come to the Preparatory Committee meeting next May ready to engage on implementation of all elements of the Action Plan. And we should not forget High Representative Duarte's call to arms – so to speak – yesterday that "as disarmament advances, so the world advances".

Thank you Mr Chairman.