Statement by Mr. Yusuf Mammadaliyev, Counselor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, at the General Debate of the First Committee
New York, October 6, 2011

Mr. Chairman,

Since my Delegation is taking the floor for the first time, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Committee. Azerbaijan aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to make a few additional remarks in our national capacity.

As a country suffering from the scourge of war and situating in proximity to other conflicts affecting the regional countries, Azerbaijan is determined to establish lasting peace and stability in the region of South Caucasus and beyond on the basis of the generally accepted norms and principles of international law, the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions as well as the appropriate documents and decisions adopted by other international organizations. Azerbaijan is fully committed to and making sustained efforts for maintaining international peace, security and stability, including though contributing to peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

We attach significant importance to the issues pertaining to Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA).

Azerbaijan has been actively engaged in addressing the SALW proliferation problem at the international level, including through undertaking efforts aimed at strengthening regional cooperation for combating illicit trafficking of any kind. In this regard, the fulfillment in good faith of the obligations assumed by States acquires particular importance.

Azerbaijan fully supports the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons of 2000 and considers it as one of the major achievements. We believe that more efforts are needed to increase transparency in SALW sales and effectively address the challenges caused by their illegal circulation. It is particularly important to ensure that small arms and light weapons are not transferred to separatist and terrorist groups and that unreported procurements are revealed and prosecuted. Urgent measures to this end, among them the enhanced information exchange and development of appropriate verification regimes and techniques, will significantly contribute to the security and stability in the OSCE area, including the region of South Caucasus.

Success in counteracting the illegal proliferation and storage of SALW in the South Caucasus could be only possible through the creation of stable and secure region, respect for international
law, abandonment of territorial claims towards neighboring nations and discontinuation of support to separatists and terrorists.

Azerbaijan also supports the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and takes appropriate measures at national, regional and global levels to ensure the proper implementation of this document.

Mr. Chairman,

We will not surprise anybody by having repeated once again that the territories of Azerbaijan occupied as a result of armed aggression by neighboring Armenia have become a black hole in the zone of the CFE Treaty application. The international community has tolerated and lived with the situation in which hundreds of pieces of TLE (treaty limited equipment) belonging to one State Party have been illegally deployed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, in gross violation of the CFE Treaty provisions. The occupied territories of Azerbaijan provided the occupying Power with the opportunity to use these areas as repair facilities and, moreover, to transfer and hide TLE from the international control regimes. The off-budget expenses for the needs of the armed forces deployed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is a yet another evidence of militaristic and annexationist aspirations.

The UTLE problem, which adversely affects the operation of the CFE Treaty, should be further addressed in a consistent manner to promote the efficiency and integrity of the Treaty’s regime. Otherwise, as we have repeatedly stated in the past, the CFE community would run the risk of exporting old and unsettled problems into the new negotiations.

We believe that these violations are of a substantive nature. They affect the bases of the Treaty relationship between the Parties and call into question the future value and possibility of this relationship in an area governed by the Treaty. In effect, these violations are tantamount to a repudiation of a Treaty commitment.

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan fully supports the goals, purposes and principles of the Ottawa Convention and comprehensive ban of use, storage and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Azerbaijan considers that full ban and destruction of anti-personnel landmines is an important humanitarian objective of the world community in the XXI century. Azerbaijan is not a party to the Ottawa Convention, and such situation is influenced by the continuing occupation of our territories and is caused by the unfortunate need to use landmines as a measure of containment from possible resumption of hostilities.

At the same time, Azerbaijan follows most of the Convention’s provisions by not producing or transferring antipersonnel mines. In addition, Azerbaijan votes in favour of the annual General Assembly resolution in this regard, which, inter alia, calls for universalization of the Ottawa Convention, and thus demonstrates its willingness to support the global endeavor of making the world free of the menace of mines. Moreover, as a sign of our support to the Ottawa Process, since 2008 Azerbaijan has been voluntarily submitting the Report pursuant to Article 7 of the Convention.

Thank You.