Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Desra Percaya, on the election as the Chairman of this Committee during its 67th session. Our congratulations also go to other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your competent leadership we will be able to achieve significant results in our work. Let me assure my delegation’s full cooperation with you during the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the position that nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential risk to humanity and the regime set up to deal with these weapons remains to be incomplete. While being a cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation system, the NPT still lacks some significant elements to provide a comprehensive response to all the challenges.

Although we welcome the outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference held in Vienna this year, as an important development, we realize that we still have significant work to do in order to allow these outcomes to materialize in concrete results.

We believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a vital instrument which contributes to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should enter into force in the nearest future. Renewed political commitments to pursue its ratification give us solid grounds for optimism. On its part Georgia continues to actively cooperate with the CTBTO Provisional Technical Secretariat to strengthen the monitoring and verification system.
Mr. Chairman,

We are deeply concerned that the international community continues to be unable to start disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, as we witness yet another year of stalemate at this forum. Further prolongation of the already long-standing impasse is absolutely unacceptable, as the time plays against us in this particular case. We are afraid that should this situation continue to remain without solution as it is now for another year or two, the international community’s confidence in the CD would start to dwindle fast, thus degrading the whole process to a state beyond the possibility to bring it back to life. Along with many other delegations, we also believe that this session of the First Committee should take up serious consideration of how the work of the CD should be pursued.

As many speakers before me emphasized, the illicit manufacture, accumulation, transfer and flow of small arms and light weapons remains to be one of the most challenging items on the international security agenda. In this context, Georgia is also delighted that the 2012 Review Conference on UN Programme of Action on SALW was able to agree on the outcome, reaffirming UN Member States' commitment to its implementation. We thank Ambassador Joy Ogwu for her skillful guidance that led us to this success.

We fully support the position expressed by many delegations that the measures to prevent the trafficking in conventional weapons can be effective if they are coupled with rigorous transfer controls on the legal arms trade, taking into account the criteria such as international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights, as well as the risk of abuse and diversion. This is why Georgia is fully committed to the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty. Failure to reach agreement at the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty last July, was a matter of disappointment. We have lost some precious time but nevertheless, Georgia will continue to support the completion of negotiations of an ATT at the final UN Conference in early 2013. We consider the draft submitted by the president of the Conference a good basis for negotiations.

Besides all these known and, as we believe, well understood problems, new threats like cyber-attacks have emerged and are evolving rapidly. At the time being, we doubt that we have sufficient understanding of their potential effects on our interdependent world, and thus lack the instruments to adequately respond to these challenges. We believe that it is the responsibility of the United Nations, and first of all, the First Committee, to contribute to scrutinising the problem and raising the awareness and understanding of this challenge in the international community, providing essential platform for elaborating mechanisms and instruments aiming at diffusing this threat.

Mr. Chairman,
Preventing the risk of nuclear terrorism, the need for compliance with obligations under Security Council Resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009) and improving security for high radioactive sources is one of the main priorities of Georgia. My country joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and continues to support consolidating efforts of the international community to combat illicit acquisition, use or transportation of nuclear materials and radioactive substances.

The fact that in recent years there were several attempts of nuclear smuggling via now occupied Georgian territories further amplify the sense of danger. All the attempts have been prevented by the Georgian law enforcement authorities. Yet in the absence of international presence these occupied territories have become completely opaque making it impossible to conduct verification activities there and thus the risk of nuclear smuggling through these territories has significantly increased.

Existence of so called white spots in the occupied territories, where international control mechanisms are either very weak or non-existent, creates fertile ground for illicit transfer and sale of conventional arms, their accumulation, as well as the illegal transit of weapons of mass destruction and its materials, including nuclear materials.

The example of my country once again proves that, despite numerous initiatives, the world continues to face serious proliferation concerns. Georgia, along with other states, is also deeply troubled that some countries continue to stand in the way of any real progress on international non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament efforts. The only effective measure to counter this trend would be a strong and unequivocal response of the international community to effectively counter such tendencies.

As I spoke about the attempts to use the occupied territories of Georgia for smuggling of radioactive and nuclear materials, allow me to say a few words on the risk of conventional arms proliferation through these territories. As you are aware, the accumulation of vast amount of armaments is being continued in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

Foreign military build-up has magnified exponentially in the aftermath of the 2008 invasion in direct contravention of the Six Point Ceasefire Agreement mediated by France on behalf of the European Union for the withdrawal of the military forces to the positions held prior to the invasion. Our neighbour from the North continues its illegal military build-up in the occupied territories - Instead of being closed down, the illegal military bases are being reinforced by additional personnel and equipment.

Excessive concentration of manpower and offensive equipment in the areas adjacent to the administrative boundaries of these occupied provinces, in "coincidence" with large scale
military maneuvers "Kavkaz-2012", have been observed during most recent weeks. These processes were confirmed by the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

In addition, as long as international control mechanisms are totally absent in those territories, there are no guarantees whatsoever that these arms, including the most dangerous ones like MANPAD, would not be transferred to various terrorists and criminal groups, which would pose serious threat not only to one particular region but to the whole international community.

Mr. Chairman,

We are convinced that in these circumstances, it is an appropriate time for the international community to stand up for the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Georgia considers the First Committee a fundamental body to be seized not only with elaborating initiatives and ideas for addressing existing problems in the fields of non-proliferation and disarmament but also with most critical issues related to international and national security.

Thank you.