Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of this session of the First Committee and wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in your important work. I assure you of my delegation’s fullest cooperation throughout the work of the Committee and its readiness to engage constructively in our collective endeavour to try to make the world a safer place for all.

Serbia has aligned itself with the statement of the European Union; nonetheless, I shall make a few additional remarks.

My country has consistently been a staunch supporter of proactive multilateralism and has been holding a view that, in a world of increasing interdependence and complexity, common challenges require common solutions. There is no doubt that the future prospects of ensuring progress in the international disarmament and arms control arena depend by and large on the developments in the ever-evolving political and strategic global environment. At the same time, the positive results in this arena provide an important stimulus to strengthening international peace and security. This interconnection between the global political and strategic climate and the achievements in the field of disarmament makes it incumbent upon us to invest additional efforts to advance the work of the multilateral disarmament machinery and thus help improve the overall situation in the world.

Serbia has acceded to all major international agreements and initiatives in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control and is committed to a full and systematic implementation of the obligations it has assumed.
The successful conclusion of 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the adoption of its comprehensive and forward-looking Action Plan by consensus are crucial contributions to strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and reaffirming the continued importance of the Treaty. The new NPT review cycle is a new opportunity to take stock of progress made in the implementation of the 2010 NPT Action Plan and identify the ways to address the remaining challenges related to the three pillars of the Treaty.

My country is resolved to consistently abide by its commitments under the NPT and has taken extensive legislative, regulatory and other measures in this regard. It is also involved in various international efforts aimed at preventing and combating nuclear terrorism and enhancing security of nuclear materials and technologies. Serbia joined the Proliferation Security Initiative in 2006 and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in 2007. It has ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Furthermore, Serbia’s adherence to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Radioactive Waste Management is expected to be approved soon. Intensive activities aimed at improving the national system for emergency preparedness and response have been taken too. Significant progress has been made on the strengthening of physical protection of nuclear objects and nuclear safety and security, including the establishment of the Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, fully operational since 2010.

Serbia strongly supports an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and encourages all States that have not yet signed or ratified it, especially the States from Annex II, to do so as soon as possible. Also, my country continues to attach great importance to the fulfilment of the obligations under SC resolution 1540 (2004) and, in January 2012, submitted to the relevant SC Committee the updated national report on the measures taken in order to implement this resolution. In addition, Serbia is the first country in the wider region to adopt the National Action Plan for the implementation of SC resolution 1540 (2004) in the period 2012-2016.

Serbia is committed to a full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Law on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction was adopted by the Serbian Parliament in 2009. Cooperation with OPCW continues to progress and includes, inter alia, the organization of international training on response to chemical attacks and incidents at the CBRN Training Centre of the Serbian Armed Forces in Kruševac.

Serbia has demonstrated its continued engagement in the area of improving its capacities regarding the various aspects of the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The Framework Law on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of this type of weapons and on their destruction was adopted in November 2011. In May 2009, the National Assembly of Serbia adopted the Law on the withdrawal of the reservation to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare.

Serbia participates in the European Union CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, jointly implemented by the European Commission and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. The National CBRN Team comprised of the representatives of all relevant Ministries and government agencies has been established with the tasks to follow-up the operational implementation of the project and coordinate activities at the national level and international cooperation in this regard.

Numerous projects in the area of the prevention, combat and eradication of illicit trade in SALW are being implemented. I will use this opportunity to mention just a few. The Capacity Development Programme for Conventional Ammunition Stockpile Management is being jointly implemented by UNDP, OSCE and the Ministry of Defence of Serbia with the aim of improving the safety of ammunition storage sites and contributing to the counter-proliferation by reducing the quantity and reinforcing security of surplus stockpiles. In April 2012, the regional conference of the South-East Europe Cooperation Process on enhancing the mutual cooperation in the region in resolving the surplus arms issue was held in Belgrade. Serbia has established a stringent and effective arms and military equipment export control system consistent with the standards of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Trade, also incorporated in the National Strategy for the Control of SALW for the period 2010-2015.

Serbia continues to work on the fulfillment of its remaining obligations under the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines to which it acceded in 2003.

My country regrets that the process of the elaboration of an Arms Trade Treaty has not come to a successful conclusion in July but it will continue to support the finalization of the work and the adoption of a
Serbia continues to implement the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control (Article IV, Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords), thus contributing to the fostering of the atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the sub-region. A new stage of implementation of the Agreement based on the transfer of ownership to the State Parties is under way and is to be finalized by 2014.

In order to make a full contribution to the relevant United Nations activities in the field of disarmament, my country submitted its candidature for membership in the Conference on Disarmament. UN General Assembly resolution 66/59 entitled “Report of the Conference on Disarmament” in its operative paragraph 6 “recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament”, while the Rules of Procedure of the Conference itself envisage that “the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals”. Serbia supports the appointment of a Special Coordinator on Expansion of the Membership of the Conference in order to continue consultations on this issue in an organized manner. The current stalemate in the work of the Conference has to be overcome through the demonstration of clear political will by all Member States to proceed, seriously and without delay, with substantive work, thus enabling the Conference to resume its original function. This is a true test of its credibility and ability to reaffirm its own significance as an indispensable element of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.