GEORGIA

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Statement by

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(Please check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to other members of the Bureau. I am convinced that under your competent and prudent leadership we will succeed in our work. Allow me to assure you that the Georgian delegation will support and assist you in your endeavors.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to once again express Georgia’s strong condemnation of the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria. We expect that the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons missions will expeditiously and successfully fulfill their mandates.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria offers us a stark reminder of why the international community has an obligation to intensify its efforts for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in all their forms and from all military arsenals.

In this light, let me press again that despite a wide understanding that Nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat to humanity, the NPT, as the cornerstone of the international nuclear nonproliferation system, still lacks significant elements to provide comprehensive response to the challenges we all face.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, as a vital instrument to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, must enter into force without further delay. On its part, Georgia continues to actively cooperate with the CTBTO Provisional Technical Secretariat to strengthen the monitoring and verification system.

Preventing the risk of nuclear terrorism and improving security by providing safe storage facilities for radioactive materials remain to be top priorities for Georgia. We have joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and strongly support consolidating efforts of the international community to combat illicit acquisition, retention, transportation, transfer and use of nuclear materials and radioactive substances.

Mr. Chairman,

We regret that the international disarmament fora, namely the Conference on Disarmament, continue to fail to fulfill their mandates. Georgia supports all efforts aimed at reinvigorating the multilateral disarmament frameworks. Further procrastination may well lead to the dwindling confidence of the international community in the Conference on Disarmament. Therefore, we hope that the Open Ended Working Group for Nuclear Disarmament, which met in Geneva this year, can offer a much-needed opportunity to move forward.

Mr. Chairman,

Georgia fully shares the common approaches of the international community regarding the problem of illicit trade in conventional arms. Uncontrolled dissemination and excessive accumulation of conventional arms and ammunition represents a serious threat to international peace and security. Due to the well-known security situation in Georgia, we consider creation of
an effective legally-binding mechanism aimed at curbing illegal flow of arms as a matter of primary importance for us.

Georgia believes that the adoption of a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) aimed at regulating international trade in conventional arms, is an historic diplomatic achievement and is indeed a “victory for the world’s people”. We are convinced that the Treaty has the real potential to eradicate illicit arms trade, to genuinely contribute to the humanitarian objectives and, overall, to foster global peace and security.

We applaud the relevant provisions of the Document, for example Article 7, that requires all states parties to take into account human security considerations – to make relevant assessments, whether arms exported would “contribute to or undermine peace and security” and, if there still remains an “overriding risk” of “negative consequences” to “not authorize the export”. I would like to use this opportunity to announce Georgia's support for Switzerland's proposal to host the future Secretariat of the ATT in Geneva.

Georgia as a co-sponsor, together with many other states, of the process launched in December 2006, is currently finalizing necessary internal formalities to ensure timely joining of this milestone Document.

Mr. Chairman,

Along with the old threats that we have been facing for many years and decades, a new one - a cyber-attack - has recently emerged and is evolving rapidly. At this point, I doubt we have sufficient understanding of its potential impact on our interdependent world at this stage of globalization. Consequently, we lack necessary instruments to adequately respond to the challenges posed by cyber-attacks. Georgia believes that it is the duty of the United Nations and the First Committee to delve into this problem and, ultimately, contribute in providing a relevant platform, mechanisms and instruments for eradicating the cyber threat.

Mr. Chairman,

As I speak, 20 percent of my country remains under illegal Russian military occupation, which poses a serious threat to my nation’s security and the well-being of its citizens. Russia's military build-up has intensified exponentially in the aftermath of the 2008 invasion in flagrant violation of international law and the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement. Furthermore, as long as international mechanisms are totally absent in the occupied territories, there are no guarantees that the military arsenal, including the most dangerous weapons systems, would not be transferred to terrorist or criminal groups.

Allow me to refer to some of the most pressing recent developments. Despite Georgia's peaceful initiatives aimed at improving relations with its northern neighbor, the occupation forces have begun large-scale installation of barbwires and fences along the occupation line. In recent months, this process has intensified and expanded. By now, the total length of barbwires in central Georgia has reached 35 km and the process is well in progress. In many places, barbwire fencesleave houses and agricultural lands of local residents on the other side of the occupation line, causing dire humanitarian consequences.
Similarly, in Abkhazia, Georgia 3km long trenches have already been created, with embankments and engineering structures erected along the occupation line.

The latest wave of the so-called "borderization" is accompanied by incidents of intimidation and acts of violence against local residents. Families are forced to demolish their houses and abandon ancestral land. The installation of barbwire fences in the Tskhinvali region has already affected 65 local families leaving them virtually without land and subsistence and creating a new wave of IDPs. The ongoing process of occupation divides families and communities and prevents people-to-people contacts. People residing within the occupied regions and in the adjacent areas are deprived of their fundamental rights and freedoms, including, but not limited to the freedom of movement, family life, right to education in native language and other civil and economic rights.

Mr. Chairman,

We are convinced that it is time for the international community to stand up for principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Hence, the First Committee apart from being seized with elaborating initiatives and ideas to address the existing problems in the fields of nonproliferation and disarmament should also address the most critical issues related to international, regional and national security.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.