Thank you Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the State Palestine, allow me to congratulate you on your well-deserved election as Chair of the First Committee for this 72nd session of the UN General Assembly and express our pride to have for the second year in a row an Arab country chair this important committee. We seize this occasion to express our appreciation for all the efforts undertaken by Algeria in its capacity as Chair of this committee during the previous session. Allow me also to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau and to wish them all success in their duties.

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Yemen on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Chair,

As a State party to several disarmament conventions and to core international humanitarian law conventions, the State of Palestine underlines the vital articulation between disarmament and IHL. Key IHL principles include the principle of humanity, the principle that the right of parties to an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited, the rule of distinction, the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks, the rules on proportionality and precautions in attack, the prohibition on the use of weapons of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, and the rules for the protection of the natural environment.

The greatest possible breach to these principles derives from the existence and potential use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, with their indiscriminate short-term and long-term effects. Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are complementary and equally essential for ensuring international peace and security.

There is no substitute to the total elimination of nuclear weapons to preserve us from the existential threat posed by such weapons. This is why the State of Palestine is proud to have participated in and contributed to the elaboration of a landmark and historic treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We seize this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to all participants to the Conference to elaborate this treaty for having decided by consensus to allow for the participation of the State of Palestine and the Holy See with equal rights, including the right to vote. Palestine exercised this right to vote for the adoption of the treaty and was among the States signatories of the treaty on day 1. We seize this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.
Mr. Chair,

We deeply regret the failure of the 9th NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final document. This constitutes a setback for efforts to advance full implementation of existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament commitments towards fulfillment of Article VI of the NPT. Twenty-two years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and 7 years after the adoption of the 2010 Action Plan on the Middle East, we have a responsibility to act to bring into being a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East, a prospect more needed than ever.

Israel continues to illegally develop a nuclear arsenal, and refuses to renounce it and to accede to the NPT without precondition and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards, thus single-handedly blocking the prospect of such a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The State of Palestine however has decided to commit itself to upholding all prohibitions enacted in relation to weapons of mass destruction, including the prohibition to develop, produce, otherwise possess, acquire, stockpile, transfer, directly or indirectly, such weapons, as well as the prohibition to assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any of the prohibited activities under the relevant legal instruments.

While not yet a party to the Arms Trade Treaty, Palestine fully endorses and supports the underlying principles behind the conclusion of the treaty, its object and purpose and the prohibitions it formulates.

Palestine also underlines our shared and collective responsibility to preserve and protect the spaces which belong to all humanity: outer-space, the seabed and ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof and cyberspace. Ensuring these are safe and secure spaces dedicated to research and development and our collective human advancement is essential for promoting international cooperation and safeguarding international peace and security.

Thank you Mr Chair.