Statement
by the Representative of Ukraine at
the General Debate in the First Committee of the 57th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine I would like to extend our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of our full cooperation and support in the discharge of your duties.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our special thanks and gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Mr. Dayantha Dhanapala, and to the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their continued support in the furtherance of the work of the Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

In the face of the aggravation of the world’s security and stability situation following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, the international community focuses its attention on the role of the existing instruments that serve as a basis of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes. The universal adherence to and enhancement of the NPT and CTBT efficiency remain among the major tasks in this field.

We welcome the signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty as well as the Joint Declaration on new strategic relations between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. The new agreement, which determines in a legally-binding form the limits for nuclear-weapon potentialities of the parties, is a logical continuation of the nuclear arms reductions framework, whose basic components are the Treaty on the Intermediate Nuclear Forces of 1987 and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 1991. We expect that this process will be irreversible.

Laying foundations for new strategic relations between the two countries, their leaders underlined the importance of taking into consideration the interrelation between offensive and defensive arms, which has a special meaning in the circumstances, when the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) ceased to exist. We positively assess the intentions of the United States of America and the Russian Federation to determine further areas of cooperation on the ABM-related issues. Ukraine, as a country that participated in the implementation of the ABM Treaty, will be ready to contribute to this process, in particular, in the context of consideration of the ballistic missile defense for Europe.

The international community should display caution and avoid the situation, when the outer space becomes a testing ground or deployment site for sophisticated weapons. There is an urgent need to develop a set of confidence-building measures, aimed at reassuring those, who express legitimate concerns, that their defense capabilities will not be affected by the absence of the ABM Treaty. We are prepared
to consider other options, in particular those, which were put forward at the Conference on Disarmament this year.

Mr. Chairman,

From Ukraine’s perspective, risks and threats associated with missile proliferation should be addressed not only by means of relevant defense systems, but also by the international multilateral instruments. The successful conclusion of work on the elaboration of the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation deserves strongest support from the international community. We believe that a new multilateral instrument with the potential for universal adherence will provide the international community with additional tools for the strengthening of global security. We are also convinced that the United Nations has an important role to play in curbing missile proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

The fabric of multilateral disarmament and arms control treaties was primarily directed to prevent possession of weapons of mass destruction by states. Ensuring universal adherence to these instruments remains an important goal for the international community. Ukraine welcomes the historic decision by the Republic of Cuba to become party to the NPT. This step provides a good example for those states, which remain outside the Treaty.

We are concerned that some non-state actors have aspirations to gain access to WMD, their carriers, related materials and technology. In this regard Ukraine welcomes the Initiative "Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction", which was launched by the G8 Leaders in Kananaskis and expresses the willingness to start appropriate negotiations within its framework, since our country faces serious problems, which have to be resolved as the complementary measures to nuclear disarmament process already completed in Ukraine. Ukraine would highly appreciate the assistance from the G8 countries for addressing these issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Ensuring proper implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the key priorities of the foreign policy of Ukraine in the sphere of non-proliferation and arms control. We are convinced that complete ban of chemical weapons and their destruction will greatly contribute to the elimination of threats to the international security, global and regional stability. Ukraine calls on all the countries, that have not yet ratified or signed the Convention, to join it as soon as possible.

Ukraine considers the Biological Weapons Convention as one of the important elements of the WMD non-proliferation regime and supports additional measures to ensure full compliance by the States-Parties with the BWC provisions. We believe that suspension of the negotiations on the BWC Protocol should not lead to the failure of the international efforts to strengthen compliance with the Convention.
At the same time we see no major impediments which would not allow to accommodate the provisions of the draft Protocol and the additional proposals in one integrated BWC compliance control instrument.

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine has continuously expressed its concern about the serious humanitarian consequences of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We are deeply convinced that without joint practical efforts of the international community to prevent uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons it is impossible to strengthen peace, regional and global security.

The Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a significant but only the first step towards the goal of controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We hope that within the follow-up process at global, regional and national levels it will be possible to make the implementation of the Programme of Action more efficient as well as to find the ways for strengthening and developing measures contained therein.

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine supports the 10 December 2001 decision of the European Union to launch the “Targeted Initiative” to respond effectively in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control to the international threat of terrorism by focusing on multilateral instruments, export control, international cooperation and political dialogue.

Ukraine is currently taking steps to become a successor of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, and to complete the preparatory work for the ratification of the Additional Protocols to Safeguards Agreements with International Atomic Energy Agency. We are also engaged in the dialogue and cooperation with our international partners on the issues of elimination of antipersonnel landmines (APLs) stockpiled in Ukraine in order to advance ratification of the Ottawa Convention banning APLs.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation will elaborate more on our arms control priorities during the focused discussion of specific items on the agenda of the First Committee.

Thank you.