Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of the full support of Serbian delegation in the discharge of your important duties. I wish you, on behalf of my delegation, every success.

It is our belief that we all strive to live in a more secure and peaceful world, despite all the challenges we face. Those challenges, like the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria, do not affect only individuals or some countries – they affect the international community as a whole, and it is our common responsibility to prevent incidents like this from happening in the years to come. We firmly believe that the role of the United Nations is crucial for an impartial investigation of such cases and we strongly support further decisive engagement of the United Nations in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to once again express strong opposition of the Republic of Serbia to the use of chemical weapons, which is a serious violation of the international law. As a State Party to the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and on their destruction, we are in favour of their complete elimination. To this end, we welcome and fully support the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013) on chemical weapons in Syria, based on the decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, of which my country is currently a member. This important Resolution strongly expresses the position of the international community that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable, and constitutes a key step towards creating the possibilities for the safe and stable future of all citizens of Syria. We consider extremely important the accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention by Syria, believing that Syria has thus made a significant step towards the establishment of peace and the easing of tensions in the entire region. The Republic of Serbia expresses its hope that the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria will be followed by strong diplomatic efforts aimed at putting an end to violence and reaching a sustainable solution.

Mr. Chairman,

Regretfully, we still live in a world where nuclear weapons exist. Even with a considerable reduction in nuclear stocks, there is still a lot to be done in this field. In this regard, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains a vital instrument in strengthening the international security and a cornerstone of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. As such, NPT should be further enhanced through full compliance by all State Parties. Adoption of
the comprehensive and forward-looking Action Plan in 2010 contributed to reaffirming of the continued importance of the Treaty. The forthcoming new cycle of the NPT review process will be an opportunity to assess the practical achievements in the implementation of the Action Plan and define the ways to boost the progress in this regard.

My country is committed to the fulfillment of the obligations it has assumed under the NPT and has undertaken extensive legislative, regulatory and other measures on the national level in this regard.

Serbia is strongly advocating entering into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), as another important international instrument in reaching the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Also, it continues to attach great importance to the fulfillment of the obligations under the UNSC resolution 1540 (2004). Serbia is among the few members of the Untied Nations, and the first country in the region of Southeastern Europe, that adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of Resolution 1540. Additionally, we hosted the first Regional Workshop on the implementation of the Resolution 1540. In April 2013, Republic of Serbia became a full member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), a prestigious international export control regime relating to the export of nuclear materials and dual-use goods.

Serbia has also acceded to all major international instruments in the field of combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We are in the process of adopting another set of legislative instruments (Law on the International Restrictive Measures, Law on the export and import of arms and military equipment, Law on Export and Import of Dual Use Goods), with the intention to modernize the existing solutions in certain areas and fully correspond to the changes in the EU legislation and the new obligations arising from the resolutions of the UN Security Council and other international documents.

Along with other Parties, Serbia continues to implement the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms, which was adopted under Article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords and has made an immeasurable and distinct contribution to confidence and security-building in our region. Belgrade will be hosting the meeting of the Sub-regional Consulting Commission at the end of this month.

Serbia welcomes the historical adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, that will contribute to more responsible and transparent international arm transfers. Serbia signed the Treaty on August 12, and it is expected that the ratification process will begin soon.

Mr. Chairman,

Serbia believes that productive multilateralism has an indispensable role in addressing challenges in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation in an effective and sustainable manner.

Regretfully, we are faced with a prolonged stalemate in the work of multilateral disarmament machinery and in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We should remain committed to revitalizing multilateral negotiating bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, in order to achieve concrete and effective measures that could contribute to positive results in this arena.

Furthermore, we hope that the member States of the Conference on Disarmament will finally consider another essential issue that is of particular interest to my country. It is the issue of enlargement of the Conference. Every one of us should be given an opportunity to participate in future talks on revitalization of the multilateral disarmament machinery and take their share of responsibility. We all must demonstrate clear political will to overcome the ongoing stalemate and engage, seriously and without delay, in substantive discussions on core issues on its agenda in order to make a credible contribution to international peace and security. Serbia stands ready to play a very active role in this regard.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.