Thank you, Mr. Chairman – and may I congratulate you on your appointment to this august post.

Your Excellencies, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I once again am glad to have the opportunity to address you, and provide a brief update on the activities and status of UNIDIR during the past year. As many of you know, UNIDIR was created in the wake of the First Special Session on Disarmament, SSOD1, as an autonomous institute under a GA mandate. Under our statute, the Institute is designed to undertake independent research, analysis and educational activities with an aim to promote informed participation by Member States in efforts towards disarmament, arms control, peace and security.

The past year the Institute has been blessed with opportunities – as the temperature in the disarmament and arms control arena has warmed up a bit – but also beset by serious challenges. Despite these challenges, UNIDIR has continued to uphold its long-standing record of providing relevant, informative and useful research and analysis to Member States – and we have greatly appreciated your support and encouragement regarding the benefits of our activities to Member States and to the disarmament community at large.

One of the key themes of the Institute’s work this year has been building and expanding our substantive cooperation on issues of peace and security, with fellow members of the UN family, the academic and scientific world, and civil society. For example, we have been working with colleagues at the OPCW to establish a framework for future cooperation, holding our first joint meeting in February in the Hague to explore the shift in the focus of the Chemical Weapons Convention toward non-proliferation and maintenance of a CW free world. And I would be remiss not to
pause a moment here to congratulate our colleagues in the Hague for their Nobel prize award – a much deserved honor.

UNIDIR further has been working closely with the ISU to find creative ways to bolster implementation and confidence in the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, focusing on the concept of peer review and well as transparency and confidence-building.

Over the past year, the Institute has been participating in the efforts of the Global Partnership process on WMD non-proliferation – at the request of the GP Member States. One area of concentration for us within the GP process is to explore opportunities to support the 1540 Committee.

One of UNIDIR’s flagship projects, which will continue into next year, involves working directly in support of the 26-member Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Development and Reintegration (DDR) to develop an evidence-based, strategic design approach to UN programming for Reintegration that promises to improve results in the field. This is an excellent example of UNIDIR acting as a force multiplier for substantive agencies working in peace and security.

With the more optimistic atmosphere surrounding nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that has emerged over the past 12 months, UNIDIR increasingly has partnered directly with Member States to build momentum for action. For example, UNIDIR has been at the forefront in assisting Member State efforts to: seek levers to dislodge the Conference on Disarmament from its state of suspended animation; to support creative interaction during the Open Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament; to explore, in a holistic manner, the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament; and to provide analysis to help underpin future negotiations on fissile materials.
In addition, UNIDIR continues to put an emphasis on efforts to control the proliferation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons that contribute to instability and conflict around the world. UNIDIR began work in 2008 to support the elaboration, later the negotiation of, the Arms Trade Treaty. In the wake of the treaty’s successful conclusion in April of this year, our work will continue – in cooperation with our partners in civil society and in support of the implementation efforts of our friends and colleagues at the Office of Disarmament Affairs.

Another keystone project underway is the development of a software tool designed to assist Member States with implementation of their commitments to control small arms and light weapons via the International Small Arms Control Standards. Indeed, if you would like to see a demonstration of this tool, come to our lunchtime event this afternoon in Room A. Working closely with the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), the Institute has completed testing its prototype tool, which will be available to all Member States at the beginning of the year.

It should be clear that one of the strengths of the UNIDIR “model” of operations is our ability to interact directly with our “clientele” in the international security community, in a manner that serves as a force multiplier. UNIDIR has traditionally been a “lean and mean” organization, relying on a small number of specialized institutional staff responsible for the Institute’s vision, management and day-to-day operations as well as a variable pool of high-caliber researchers and analysts who undertake the substantive project work. While the Institute is subject to United Nations administrative and financial rules and regulations, as an autonomous organization we also have a certain amount of freedom from bureaucratic burdens that allows us to be nimble in our operations.

As most of you know, UNIDIR’s many activities are funded strictly by voluntary contributions. I therefore would first like to express my gratitude to all Member States that have funded UNIDIR’s operations during this time of financial constraint.
I am keenly aware of the budgetary and organizational pressures that take up so much of yours and our time and energies, and I appreciate all your efforts to support the Institute.

We are equally grateful to those delegations that have over the past year expressed their strong and continuing support for the autonomous and independent status of the Institute – and for the work we have been, and are, undertaking. We are heartened to know that the Institute's independent voice is so highly valued by the international peace and security community. And we remain committed to addressing the needs of ALL Member States in their disarmament and arms control activities as best we can.

That said, the financial environment continues to take its toll on the Institute and its functioning. This year saw the loss of yet another institutional staff member, whom we have not had funding to replace, thus reducing our capacity to carry out our project portfolio, activities and outreach. In particular, this has resulted in the cessation of our quarterly journal, Disarmament Forum, the only regular UN journal dedicated to disarmament issues published in both English and French.

A key part of the financial difficulties faced by the Institute has been the shift in government funding patterns away from institutional support to highly restricted funding for specific projects. Over the past year, about 82 percent of funds coming to UNIDIR have been earmarked for project work – often with stipulations that limit the amount that can be spent on overhead or institutional staff functions required for administration and oversight of the projects themselves. This has created a disconnect between the desire of Member States for UNIDIR to take on new projects and activities, and the Institution's capacity to develop, manage, evaluate and disseminate the results from those projects and activities. While UNIDIR receives a very small subvention from the regular budget that was initially designed to cover institutional staff costs, that subvention for many years has covered only one staff
member – despite many resolutions by Member States and the Board of Trustees that it be increased.

The lack of non-earmarked funding is creating several operational concerns. Many of you will have heard me express regret at our lack of capacity to carry out “rapid response” research and educational activities: there is simply no pool of funds to accommodate non-project-related activities; nor do we have standing research staff to undertake such activities. Furthermore, the Institute struggles mightily to address its full mandate under the constraint that most funding is tied to specific projects underwritten by a handful of donors. Lack of institutional and macro-programmatic resources, and a narrow donor base, inevitably means that some issues dear to the hearts of some Member States regrettably get less attention in the Institute’s agenda than they should. I am open at any time to discussions with any Member State on creative, realistic solutions.

In addition, as the United Nations itself has sought over the past year to effect much-needed reform on many levels, the perhaps unforeseen consequence has been that the administrative burden on small, voluntary-funded organizations involved has weighed heavily. And our assiduous investment in the change management process appears from where I sit regrettably to show little prospect of return in the near term either to Member States or to the Institute. Unfortunately, this exercise has meant that we have had less time available to devote to substantive project development and fundraising – creating a difficult to resolve conundrum, in that a smaller project portfolio means less income, which in turn means less capacity to undertake much-needed substantive work. Indeed, this past year saw the smallest number of specific project activities by the Institute in my 5-year tenure – in large part because of the over-stretch of human resources. Obviously, this is a problem that if left uncorrected will certainly come to undermine the efficacy of the Institute.

Nonetheless, UNIDIR remains determined to do its part to forward the cause of disarmament, non-proliferation, peace and security. I again thank all of our donors
for your past and continued financial support, and urge all Member States to consider funding the Institute – at however small a level. Every cent counts, and we promise to continue to make the best use of those cents that we can in support of the international community’s needs!

Lastly, I would like to place on record a personal tribute to the work of the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and UNIDIR’s Board of Trustees for their concerted efforts to support UNIDIR over this past difficult 12 months, and their support to myself personally as Director. Their dedication and commitment reflects without doubt a wider recognition that an independent and autonomous UNIDIR continues to have a vital role to play in supporting and indeed stimulating the achievement of the disarmament objectives that are at the core of the Charter of the United Nations.

Thank you.