Mr. Chair,

Let me start by echoing the other speakers in welcoming you as chair for our deliberations at this year’s session of the First Committee.

Mr. Chair,

We have a joint responsibility to eliminate weapons that cannot be used in accordance with international humanitarian law, and to prevent irresponsible and illegal transfer of arms.

We are facing critical challenges. Civilians continue to suffer as a result of armed conflict. The civil war in Syria continues and we have witnessed use of weapons of mass destruction. We are witnessing violation of the territorial integrity of UN member states.
The risk of nuclear proliferation remains a threat to international security. Nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is a clear violation of its international obligations.

There have also been positive developments. The Nuclear Security Summits have contributed substantially to nuclear security and to keeping fissile material beyond the reach of terrorists. Negotiations with Iran have been successful. We congratulate the P5+1, Iran, and the EU on reaching a historic and verifiable long-term agreement. We expect prompt implementation of the agreement by Iran.

Norway welcomes the continued implementation of the new START by the US and the Russian Federation. We urge Russia to respond positively to the US proposal to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads by an additional one-third.

Mr. Chair,

Our overall objective is a world free of nuclear weapons. Pending the total elimination of this category of weapons, we must continue our efforts to reduce their role. A world free of nuclear weapons will not be possible without a credible and robust non-proliferation regime.

The lack of an outcome document at the NPT Review Conference earlier this year was very disappointing. Nevertheless, the NPT remains the foundation of the international non-proliferation regime. State parties remain bound by their legal obligations under the treaty.

We must all do our part in implementing and further strengthening non-proliferation obligations. This includes strengthening the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards and Additional Protocol. The IAEA must be fully equipped to carry out its crucial non-
proliferation work, also financially. Syria and DPRK remain a proliferation challenge and concern. A political solution to these issues, would greatly strengthen the non-proliferation regime. So too would an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

Mr. Chair,

Norway will continue to look for innovative and effective measures in the field of disarmament. The Oslo conference on humanitarian consequences inaugurated a fact-based approach to nuclear disarmament.

Verification of disarmament, as developed through the UK–Norway Initiative, is another example of this approach. By exploring the technical and procedural challenges, our purpose is to demonstrate that nuclear weapon state and non-nuclear weapon state collaboration in nuclear disarmament verification is both possible and necessary. We welcome the International Partnerships on Nuclear Verification Disarmament and look forward to hosting the next plenary of the Partnership in Oslo in mid-November.

Such initiatives are essential for concrete progress on disarmament, as envisaged in article 6 of the NPT. We seek mechanisms that can unite countries in constructively moving the disarmament agenda forward. We especially call on countries that possess nuclear weapons to do more to meet the disarmament commitments of the NPT.

Norway is partner to the Nuclear Security Summit process and we confirm our commitment to nuclear security. We must keep up our efforts to secure all nuclear material, and to significantly reduce and eliminate the use of highly enriched uranium, in all applications. We are looking to intensify our efforts on this important topic.

(Check against delivery)
Mr. Chair,

The Chemical Weapons Convention has created a strong disarmament and non-proliferation norm. More than 90% of the world’s declared stocks of chemical weapons have been destroyed.

However, we remain gravely concerned about recent reports of renewed use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq. We anticipate the forthcoming report of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission. It is crucial that the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism established by Security Council resolution 2235 is given full access to carry out its mission and identify those responsible for these heinous acts.

As a major contributor to the international operation to remove and destruct Syria’s chemical weapons programme, we are concerned about the significant discrepancies and omissions in Syria’s chemical weapons declaration. And we are alarmed by Syria’s recent letter to the Security Council informing of missing chemical weapons, which may have been obtained by rebel groups.

Mr. Chair,

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) remains a cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. States Parties should focus on areas where unity is possible, and on pragmatic steps that can strengthen the convention in a constructive manner.
This includes improved national implementation, confidence-building measures, assistance and protection, universalisation of the treaty and closer collaboration of scientific and disarmament communities.

Mr. Chair,

Norway welcomes the substantive outcome of the first conference of states of states parties of the Arms Trade Treaty in Cancun, Mexico, in August. We consider the Arms Trade Treaty to be a potentially important tool both to address the flow of arms to conflict areas and to address the lack of protection for civilians.

Valuable experience can be gained from the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The facts and realities from the field continue to guide the implementations of these instruments.

The Mine Ban Convention has virtually ended the use of antipersonnel mines by establishing a legal prohibition against all production, trade and use, and requiring the destruction of stockpiles. More than 160 state parties are bound by the convention, and large areas previously contaminated have been made safe.

Last month Mozambique was declared mine free. When the convention came into existence, Mozambique was one of five most-affected states in the world. We congratulate Mozambique on this extraordinary achievement.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions held its first review conference in Dubrovnik in September. We are pleased that the conference adopted a strong political declaration, condemning any use of cluster munitions by any actor. Reports of use of cluster munitions
in Syria, Yemen and Ukraine have resulted in swift and widespread condemnation, also by non-state parties.

Norway is very pleased that universalisation efforts have gained considerable momentum: Mauritius became the 98th state party on 1 October, and the convention is likely to achieve 100 state parties in the near future.

Recent data shows that global civilian deaths and injuries from the use of explosive weapons continue to increase. This is one of the pressing humanitarian issues of our time. The UN Secretary-General has called on all parties to conflict to refrain from using explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. We strongly support his call.

Mr. Chair,

Cyber threats from state and non-state actors alike pose serious challenges to almost every nation, and constitute a potential risk to international peace and security. A just, stable and peaceful digital order can only be achieved if it is based on international law.

Largely thanks to the United Nations Government Group of Experts, it is now universally recognised that existing international law also applies to cyberspace. Further international cooperation is necessary and will benefit us all.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, my delegation hopes that this year's First Committee can assist us in promoting the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda in a constructive and forward-looking manner.

Thank you.