Mr Chair,

The Maldives Delegation congratulates you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. I would like to assure you of my delegation’s full support in the work ahead. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in his efforts to support the work of the Committee.

Mr Chair,

The Maldives does not produce any armaments or any weaponry of any type nor do we have any aspirations to do so in the future. While we lack the resources to commit towards strengthening and enforcement of a global disarmament and non proliferation regime, we believe it is our moral obligation to pave the path towards lasting peace and security.

At the inception of the UN, our nations resolved to build a world that might one day no longer be haunted by the spectre of war. At the core of this ambition was the promise of full and complete disarmament. Over the last few decades, significant progress has been made towards this goal, but recent actions have threatened to compromise this progress.

In this regard, a nuclear test conducted by any country is a considerable step backwards. Not only is it a flagrant violation of international law, but an obstacle to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We must therefore redouble our efforts to prevent further tests and stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

While the progress that has been made must be lauded, it will not be enough until all stockpiles of nuclear weapons are finally and totally eliminated, and research into new, deadlier warheads, delivery vehicles and other storage systems have been halted. Those States which aspire to use nuclear technology to useful ends must take all necessary measures to prevent proliferation, comply with the requirements of international law, and commit not to acquire, develop or produce nuclear weapons. We note with despair that not all signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty have reduced their stockpiles in accordance with the Treaty’s provisions. In global security landscape characterised by the increasing prominence of non-State actors that operate outside the structural and normative framework of international law, including terrorist groups, there is an ever growing risk that nuclear weapons could fall into the wrong hands. To prevent
such an unsettling scenario from ever coming to pass, all States must redouble their efforts against nuclear proliferation.

Mr Chair,

Last month, the Security Council adopted its Resolution 2310, marking the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. While this was an occasion worth noting, this resolution in many ways brought attention to what still remains to be done. Twenty years after its adoption, the CTBT is yet to come into force.

On 26 September, we observed the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The Secretary-General, in his address on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons expressed concerns on the failure of progress made in multilateral nuclear disarmament despite clear evidence that nuclear weapons hinder, rather than enhance, national and international peace and security. His plaintive call should inspire serious consideration on the part of us all, as to the steps we have so far not yet taken. We support the work being conducted by Member States on disarmament and non-proliferation education, and believe that awareness is key to changing perceptions and paving a path to lasting peace.

Mr Chair,

Work also remains to be done in stemming the trafficking and proliferation of small arms. The size of small arms does not negate the active and present threat they pose to human life and its threat to global peace and security. In this regard, the Maldives welcomes entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, and reports to the Committee that domestic procedures to ratify this treaty are ongoing.

Cognizant of the importance of complying with the commitments made in the context of disarmament, the Maldives would like to reiterate that our stringent domestic laws have ensured that illicit trade in arms does not occur within the Maldivian population or with other countries.

As always, the Maldives advocates for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, since the declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in 1971, to maintain peace and security in our region.

Mr Chair,

The connection between peace and security and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is clear and well-established; the objective of Goal Sixteen is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Disarmament is essential if we are to have truly, permanently peaceful societies. Likewise, just as conflict is the bane of development, the proliferation of weapons, whether conventional or nuclear, is the progenitor of conflict.

Mr Chair,

Seventy-one years, after the horrors of the nuclear bombs were first unleashed upon humanity, and seventy-one years after the establishment of the United Nations, the goal of total and complete disarmament remains a noble ambition. Despite the many challenges, we remain
confident that, if we are genuinely committed to this end, that our world can move firmly
towards a nuclear-free, peaceful future for ourselves and the generations to come.

I thank you.