Mr. Chairman,

1. I congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee of the 71st Session of the General Assembly. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Under Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for your efforts in advancing disarmament.

2. Viet Nam associates itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chairman,

3. The First Committee is having this debate as the world continues to face the dire threats posed by terrorism and the proliferation of WMDs. The international community has waited too long for the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The very existence of WMDs themselves, especially nuclear weapons, remains a danger for international peace, security and stability. The debate is also opportune as the demand for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) technologies, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes continues to grow as countries strives for sustainable development.

4. Peace, security, development and human rights are intertwined and inseparable. We believe that peace can only be sustained when we are committed with high political will to put aside selfish interests, promote mutual trust and understanding and join hands in establishing a global culture of complying and behaving in accordance with the universally recognized standards, including the fundamental principles of the

Mr. Chairman,

5. Viet Nam consistently supports efforts towards non-proliferation and general and complete disarmament, with highest priority given to weapons of mass destruction. Viet Nam believes that addressing WMD proliferation must be coupled with substantive progress in WMD disarmament, particularly towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In our view, there is a need for increased international cooperation to raise the awareness and understanding of the threats posed by WMD proliferation, and strengthen the capacity of states, in particular developing countries, in implementing their respective obligations and commitments.

6. In this regard, we welcome the conclusion of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in August in 2016 with substantive recommendations, as well as the convening of the General Assembly’s high-level informal plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September 2016. We also support all deliberations on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons which help promote the goal of nuclear disarmament.

7. We underline the importance of regional nuclear weapons free zones, including the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ), and the need for nuclear-weapon states to work towards the early signing and ratification of their respective protocols. At the same time, we are of the firm belief that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the legitimate rights of states to acquire, have access to, import or export CBRN related material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

8. Viet Nam is a party to and complies fully with its obligations under all key WMD disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, including the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the IAEA Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol, the SEANWFZ. We seriously implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including the 1540 Resolution. Viet Nam, as member of the Group of Friends of Resolution 1540, welcomes the upcoming review of the resolution and looks forward to engaging in these deliberations. We also participate in related initiatives like the Global Initiative to Combat
Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and are fully committed to cooperating with IAEA and other international partners to ensure nuclear safety and security and promote the peaceful use of energy.

Mr. Chairman,

9. With regard to conventional arms, we reiterate the legitimate rights of states to manufacture, trade and retain conventional weapons for national self-defence. We also commit to positively implementing many related international cooperation agreements, including the submission of yearly reports on arms imports and exports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We welcome the productive discussions made at the Six Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6) to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects with effective and practical measures to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands of criminals and terrorists.

10. As one of a few countries heavily affected by cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnances left over by devastating and protracted wars, we support the humanitarian goals of the Convention of Cluster Munitions and the Anti-personnel Landmines Convention, including the establishment of cooperation mechanisms and international assistance to address the aftermath of war. We are implementing effectively a comprehensive national action plan for the 2010-2025 period with our utmost determination to improve the livelihood of victims of bombs, mines and other explosive remnants of war, by conducting a wide range of demining activities, as well as providing assistance for victims, facilitating their early re-integration in the socio-economic life. We thank all international partners who have provided valuable support to us, and call on those in a position to do so to join us in this humanitarian endeavour.

Mr. Chairman,

11. We support the enhancement and reinforcement of the disarmament machinery, with special attention given to the revitalization of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC), in order to negotiate primary issues regarding nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, we welcome efforts made during the 2016 session of the CD on its programme of work and look forward to the early convening of the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament.
12. To conclude, Mr. Chairman, I would like to underline that the ultimate goals of disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other WMDs can only be achieved when all states renew their political commitments in a more responsible and trustworthy manner, enhance partnerships and engage further cooperation, including with the UN and relevant international organizations. My delegation remains strongly committed and stands ready to fully cooperate with you, Mr. Chairman and other Member States, toward a world free from all weapons of mass destruction.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.