STATEMENT
OF THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE GENERAL DEBATE

New York, 7 October 2016

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and other members of the Bureau on your election. I'm looking forward to a constructive and result orientated dialogue during our today's meeting.

Ukraine aligned itself with the statement made earlier on behalf the European Union.

Mr. Chair,

Ukraine consistently supports a multilateral approach to disarmament and international security agenda.
We recognize the difficulties in the implementation of existing international treaties and in bringing new ones into force as well as the deadlock in the disarmament negotiations.
Nevertheless, my country remains fully committed to maintaining and strengthening the current disarmament machinery and international cooperation.
We strive to reinforce the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chair,

We share the view that the use of nuclear weapons is the most serious threat that humankind faces nowadays. We believe that it is essential to strengthen international cooperation in order to reinforce existing international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Even being affected by the Russian military aggression and occupation of its territories in violation of the NPT, Ukraine continues to regard the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We render comprehensive support to its effective implementation, further strengthening and universalization.
Ukraine consistently stands for reducing the nuclear arsenals, cessation of the modernization of nuclear weapons, and overall decrease of nuclear weapons' role in military and strategic doctrines of the states.
The historic decision of my country to renounce its nuclear weapons and to access the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state was primarily based on the clear international security guarantees provided by the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances signed by Ukraine, the US, the UK and the Russian Federation.

The State-signatories to the Memorandum «reaffirmed their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations».

We deem necessary to re-emphasize that the aforementioned Memorandum was signed in connection with Ukraine’s commitments to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within the specified period of time. As a result we gave up all our nuclear arsenals. And now in return our sovereignty and territorial integrity are explicitly violated by the Russian Federation, one of the Guarantor States under the Budapest Memorandum.

We stand on the position that this Memorandum is valid and should be adhered to by all its state-signatories. Meanwhile we understand the vital importance to further negotiate a legally binding multilateral document on security assurances provided for the non-nuclear-weapon states. We should use all existing institutional mechanisms to promote the consideration and eventual fulfillment of this goal. In this regard, the NPT Review Process could serve as one of the appropriate formats to conduct relevant negotiations.

The other relevant format for the negotiations could be Conference on Disarmament. But with great disappointment we witness the incapability of the CD to provide during its 2016 session a real breakthrough and fulfill its mandate. Ukraine appeals for greater political will for disarmament efforts - finding ways of unblocking the negotiation process within the CD’s framework, being convinced that despite the protracted period of dragging, the forum’s potential has not been exhausted yet and that CD Member States will show keenness to consolidate efforts in order to overcome the existing stalemate.

Mr. Chair,

Russia seized Ukraine’s nuclear facilities, installations and materials located in Crimea. The aggressor state declares its right to deploy nuclear weapons thoroughly restoring soviet-era nuclear storage facilities and deploying the means of their delivery on the Peninsula.

Eventual implementation of these plans violates the nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament regime. It puts at stake further endeavors in this sphere. We should always remember that Ukraine’s Crimea is occupied by Russia and it is a place for military experiments now. Moreover, Russian outstanding decision to suspend Plutonium Disposition and Management Agreement is one more evidence that Kremlin is keen on accelerating new arms race. And Crimea which was a beautiful sea resort before the occupation is a polygon for Russian military plans.

We express our strong protest against such actions.
The ongoing Russian aggression has left without due control the radionuclide sources in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The numerous high-risk sites of the chemical industry were destroyed as a result of the Russian military aggression.

The current situation is highly conducive to perpetrating terrorist acts, including the use of hazardous chemicals, dangerous pathogens or radioactive material. It also gives much food for thought on real and potential threats far beyond the region.

In such toxic environment Ukraine attaches great importance to maintaining the highest standards of nuclear safety and security.

Over the past two years Ukraine significantly approved and strengthened the national regime of physical protection of its facilities and material.

Comprehensive plans of actions in case of sabotage and crisis situation were developed and introduced at all Ukrainian NPPs.

The projects for modernization of systems of physical protection of nuclear facilities were thoroughly examined and updated. An Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan of Ukraine for 2016-2018 was developed.

Ukraine is taking all necessary measures to ensure the highest level of physical protection of nuclear facilities and material, fully performs its international obligations in the area of nuclear safety and security.

We make every effort to prevent and avert all possible attempts of terrorists to conduct subversive activities against nuclear power plants and other critical nuclear infrastructure.

The state system of physical protection of nuclear sites functions in a high alert mode and the plans of interaction between Ukrainian state bodies are put into action in case of subversion.

Ukraine is strongly committed to fulfilling the principles and goals enshrined in the final documents of the Nuclear Security Summits 2010-2016. We welcome the decision to establish a Contact Group aimed at advancing the implementation of the nuclear security commitments.

Mr. Chair,

Ukraine supports the universalization of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) with a view that its entry into force will constitute a tangible stride in attaining the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. In this respect, Ukraine supported the Joint Ministerial Statement issued at the Eight CTBT Ministerial Meeting on 21 September 2016, as well as, in its capacity as the SC non-permanent Member State, the resolution 2310 (2016) adopted on 23 September.

We are encouraged by the signing of the Treaty by 183 States and welcome the ratification of the Treaty by 166 States, including 36 of the 44 (Annex 2 states), whose ratification is needed for its entry into force. At the same time, we are confident that nuclear test moratorium voluntarily declared by different states plays a necessary but not sufficient role as it will never replace the legally binding nature of the CTBT.
Therefore, Ukraine calls upon all States which have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT, in particular the eight remaining Annex 2 States, to do so without delay. Announced by the DPRK the fifth nuclear test, followed its nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013 and on 6 January 2016, proves the urgent necessity of entry into force of the CTBT and its universalization.

We also continue to insist that negotiating and concluding the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) will be essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. Ukraine strongly appeals for finding common grounds on the issue of existing fissile materials stocks and immediate commencement of negotiations on the FMCT.

Mr. Chair,

Addressing the enormous destructive power of conventional armaments continues to be of the utmost importance for the international community especially in the context of regional security. Today we must tackle the issue of illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of conventional arms with highest level of responsibility.

The Russian military aggression against Ukraine with the use of regular military forces armed with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition has significantly damaged the existing system of conventional arms control.

The Russian Federation continues its massive transfers of military goods on our territory, both to Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, through Kremlin-controlled channels thus deliberately destabilizing not only sub-regional but the entire European security and totally ignoring persistent calls of the international community to establish the effective border control.

During numerous specified meetings we bring photo-proofs of weapons and equipment on our territory that only Russian forces possess, among them versions of the T-72 and T-90 tank, armored personal carrier “BTR-82A” and “BTR-82A” the so-called Pantsir-S1 Air Defense System, Radar “Zoopark-1”, Grad-K Rocket Systems, and tragically remembered BUK-M1.

We have no right to be blind with regard to illicit supplies of conventional weapons from the Russian Federation to Ukraine.

Ukraine condemns the conduct of military exercises "Caucasus 2016" which are being held on the occupied territories and near the border of Ukraine.

On 25-31 August Russia concentrated on its south-western direction a joint military force grouping of about 100,000 soldiers (including about 41,000 near the borders of Ukraine), more than 2,500 combat vehicles, 60 ships, 400 aircrafts and helicopters. Command and staff exercises of the 1 and 2 army corps of the Russian occupation troops in Donbas were held on 5-9 September. Such practice has recently become regular.

I think that most of you know about the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Their daily reports clearly show evidence of Russian military activity in the East of my country, which the United Nations has noted as well. Just over last weekend the Special Monitoring Mission reported more than 700 explosions in Donetsk region of Ukraine. Similar reports with more or less numbers come every day since the start of the Monitoring Mission.
Mr. Chair,

Ukraine recognizes the important role of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in addressing post-conflict remedial measures in order to minimize the occurrence, risk and effects of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Being a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production, Stockpiling and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and on their Destruction (Mine ban treaty) for over 10 years Ukraine acknowledges its fundamental character in minimizing the occurrence, risk and effects of landmines.

Despite current significant challenges in the security field related to the “hybrid” war waged against our country, Ukraine fully complies with its obligations under these treaties.

As a result of the armed aggression of Russia and offensive actions carried out by the Russia-guided illegal armed groups operating in the certain areas of Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine, nowadays our country has to deal with a drastically increased number of dangerous ERW, causing severe casualties among civilians, including children.

These ERW as well as antipersonnel mines which have indiscriminate effect are planted by illegal armed groups in residential areas and routes of communication between inhabited areas thus violating the Convention. In fact they pose more threat to the civil population than to the military personnel.

Ukraine believes it is vitally important for the international community to make every effort to ensure proper implementation of CCW and MBT. Ukraine attaches great importance to further deepening cooperation with international partners in this field.

Thank you.