Statement

by Mr. Farid Jabrayilov, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, at the Thematic debate on “Regional Disarmament and Security” of the First Committee of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 24 October 2017

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan has aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to make a national statement on some important issues for my country.

Mr. Chairman,

Conventional arms control regimes are important instruments for ensuring stability, predictability and transparency in the military sphere. As a complex politico-military arrangement, any conventional arms control regime requires a high degree of commitment by States Parties to its underlying principles, as well as a respect for the norms and principles of international law, which constitutes a basic foundation of any arms control regime.

Azerbaijan has not ratified the 1992 Tashkent Agreement on the Principles and Procedures for the Implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). Nevertheless Azerbaijan has been voluntarily applying and observing all the provisions of the CFE Treaty and promoting transparency by participating in regular information exchanges and receiving inspections. Azerbaijan is actively engaged in the ongoing discussions on the future of the conventional arms control regime in Europe, aimed at overcoming the current stalemate around the Treaty.

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) are valuable tools in fostering mutual trust among States. Implementation of CBMs should take place in a manner that ensures the right of each State to equal security, guaranteeing that no individual State or group of States obtain advantages over others. CBMs cannot be taken out of the overall political and security context, in particular when conflict zones fall within the area of application. CBMs can only be effective when there is a genuine commitment of States to peace and stability supported by concrete actions that enjoy confidence.

As a participating State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Azerbaijan regularly engages in information sharing, submits reports and receives on-site inspections, evaluation and observation visits under the OSCE’s
On small arms and light weapons (SALW), Azerbaijan attaches utmost importance to the full implementation of the UN Program of Action, as the main international framework to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects, as well as the 2005 International Tracing Instrument. At the regional level, we stress the relevance of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its important contribution to tackle the problem in the OSCE area.

My country takes all appropriate measures at the national, regional and global levels to implement its SALW-related obligations. We have established an efficient inter-agency cooperation and information sharing among relevant authorities, as well as a robust export control system in Azerbaijan, which embodies best practices. Azerbaijan stands for increased transparency and responsible behavior in global trade of SALW and conventional weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Efforts to ensure the implementation of arms control, disarmament and CBM mechanisms in the South Caucasus are being seriously hampered by the continued aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan. My country is in a state of war, which it did not start, but works very hard to end. Azerbaijan is constructively engaged at all levels to restore its territorial integrity on the basis of the generally accepted norms and principles of international law, UN Charter and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The occupation by Armenia of Azerbaijan’s internationally recognized territories has been a major obstacle to the full implementation of the CFE Treaty in the South Caucasus region. Armenia flagrantly violates the fundamental principles of the CFE Treaty on the non-use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of State, and on host nation consent. Furthermore, Armenia continues its military build-up in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The overall number of the declared and undeclared Treaty-limited equipments of Armenia stationed within its own territory and in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan has far exceeded its allowed ceilings under the CFE Treaty. Against this background, Armenia still continues to misinform the UN community by deliberately providing false information about its military holdings and activities within existing data-exchange mechanisms.

Armenia’s attempts to mislead the international community by making brazen calls on the initiation of various CBMs with Azerbaijan, including in the military and economic spheres, are counter-productive. Any CBM with Armenia will not be even considered unless it withdraws its armed forces from Azerbaijan’s occupied territories and engages constructively in the negotiations on the settlement of the conflict. The realization of those preconditions will also enable the establishment of a
workable arms control regime and the effective implementation of full-fledged and meaningful CBMs in the South Caucasus region.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly drawn the attention of the international community to the illegal transfers of SALW and other conventional weaponry by Armenia to the occupied territories of my country. We urge all States to refrain from, condemn and prevent such illegal activities, which violate Azerbaijan territorial integrity and sovereignty and elude the prospects of peace in our region.

Despite all difficulties presented by the current situation, Azerbaijan is fully committed to do its utmost for the benefit of restoring peace and stability in the South Caucasus.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.