Statement

of

Ambassador Susanne Baumann

Deputy Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control

at First Committee’s general debate

Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of Germany, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you of Germany’s utmost support for your work!

2. Germany fully aligns itself with the statements delivered by the EU.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Achieving a safer and more secure world remains a priority for Germany. Unfortunately, though, we have seen a multiplication of crises, conflicts and tensions over the past years, not only in Europe but also in the Middle East where the taboo of the non-use of chemical weapons has been continuously violated.

4. North Korea is developing its nuclear and ballistic missile programme defying international law and the authority of the UNSC. Its illegal activities not only pose a serious threat to the region, but to the global security as a whole. We strongly urge North Korea to refrain from conducting further provocative or actions proscribed by the UNSC and to show readiness for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Germany supports all efforts by the international community for
even stronger sanctions on DPRK and calls upon all states to fully comply with their duties resulting from all relevant UNSC resolutions.

5. The **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action** concluded between the E3+3 and Iran in 2015 shows that an imminent nuclear proliferation crisis can be settled by diplomatic means - on the basis of the NPT - provided there is political will. Today, Iran is subject to the most robust verification and monitoring regime in the world. We are satisfied that IAEA reports confirm that Iran is acting in compliance with the JCPoA. We should refrain from any action that might potentially jeopardize the progress made so far. Rather, we need to invest our efforts in ensuring the full and strict implementation of the JCPoA. Also, if we want to continue to settle other crises by diplomatic means, we need to do everything to honor our obligations arising from agreements that we have joined. In that sense, ensuring the continued success is a very high priority for Germany. We call upon all states to comply with all stipulations laid out in the JCPoA.

6. In times of multiple conflicts and growing tensions we have to redouble our efforts when it comes to **disarmament, confidence building and transparency**. We have to strengthen the **existing architecture** instead of violating and circumventing existing norms.

This is especially true for the **INF-Treaty** which is at the heart of European security. In this regard Germany welcomes the Strategic Stability Talks between the US and Russia. It is important that the two states possessing the biggest number of nuclear weapons come to the table to clarify open questions and to lead the way to further cuts in their nuclear arsenals. An extension of the **New Start Treaty** would also be our interest as it would contribute to European security.

7. Germany remains committed to the goal of a **world free of nuclear weapons** – a goal shared by an overwhelming majority of states. Germany has consistently advocated a **pragmatic step-by-step approach** aiming for conditions that would allow for a continuous reduction of nuclear weapons and we will continue to do so.
8. For Germany the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with its three equally important pillars remains the indispensable cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Germany together with its partners of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) will undertake every effort to strengthen the ongoing Review Process and the value and effectiveness of the NPT as such.

9. This implies that we need to reinforce our efforts when it comes to nuclear disarmament. We need solid verification mechanisms and tangible disarmament measures, rather than mere declarations of goodwill. Moreover, what we need is commitment and unity around existing principles – not yet another dividing line.

10. For these reasons Germany promotes the early start of negotiations on an FMCT. The High-Level Preparatory Group is helping to further clarify the options to be negotiated eventually. We would like to thank Canada at this stage for successfully steering this process. You can count on our continued support as co-sponsor of last year’s FMCT resolution.

11. Germany also sees merit in supporting a process around the negotiation of legally binding Negative Security Assurances (NSA). We are convinced that NSAs represent a valuable instrument to further non-proliferation and a tangible step towards moving in the direction of a nuclear weapons’ free world.

Mr. Chairman,

12. Germany condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons in Syria as documented in the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission reports. We express our strong conviction that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. We believe the United Nations Security Council has to fulfill a special responsibility based on the findings of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

Germany calls upon Syria to cooperate fully with the OPCW and the JIM, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.
Mr. Chairman,

13. **Small arms and light weapons** cause tremendous human suffering. We need to strengthen the capacity-building of competent national SALW institutions – especially in fragile and conflict-affected areas – in order to help them increase their control over SALW, ammunition stockpiles and transfers. Germany has initiated a whole range of projects to tackle these challenges on the ground. As part of the G7-process we work with the African Union to improve SALW-Control in the Greater Sahel Region. In another recent engagement German disarmament experts have assisted the UN in Columbia in destroying the weapons used by the FARC-guerrillas.

14. I would also like to draw on **an emerging issue of great importance: Lethal autonomous weapons systems.** As the speed of technological progress increases, it is high time to finally tackle this issue. We see a strong need for discussing policy-guidelines and best-practices designed to ensure future weapons systems are in full compliance with international law and we look forward to contributing actively to the Group of Governmental Experts in November.

Mr. Chairman,

15. **New threats** such as the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, guaranteeing the peaceful use of outer space, the growing importance of cyberspace – require us to develop new arms-control instruments and new rules or to adapt those that already exist. Germany stands ready to work with all of you to respond to these challenges.

Thank you very much.