Thank you and good morning. Excellency, let me first congratulate you on your election to Chair this Committee. I also congratulate the bureau and wish you a successful session.

My wish for your success is not just a pleasantry. Your success in this Committee is vital to the well-being and survival of millions of people around the world.

Disarmament and International Security is a fundamental objective of this organisation. It is no accident that this priority was assigned to the first of the Main Committees to be established.

As you gather here to complete the Committee’s work, let your efforts be focused on how to save lives; secure lives; and improve lives.

This Committee has a great potential to make a real difference on the ground. In our countries, towns and villages, people desire to go about their business in peace. People look for stability and security.

You should not under-estimate your potential to facilitate that environment when addressing critical issues such as disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Your work will contribute significantly to our global efforts to prevent conflicts from escalating into global crises. I cannot emphasise enough how important it is that we work towards prevention as a key priority.

Additionally, disarmament and the non-proliferation of arms – whether conventional, small arms or nuclear weapons serves to bolster the life expectancy of peace. It is essential that we work for creating peace and importantly, for sustaining peace.

Yes, the discussions on disarmament are not easy. They often relate to very sensitive matters of national security for states.

Nevertheless, we have made progress. This year we adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This landmark treaty, opened for signature only a few days ago, moves us towards the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We should recognize this important step.

We must also acknowledge that after nearly two decades of stalemate, the Disarmament Commission reached a consensus on recommendations to be presented to the General Assembly.

But we are still faced with many challenges ahead. The final and total elimination of nuclear weapons will require us to navigate many complexities.

The evolving global environment does not look promising:

We have seen nuclear tests, and the threat of the use of nuclear weapons hangs over millions of innocent people;

An unprecedented number of people are displaced because of armed conflicts;

Modernisation of nuclear weapons arsenals is growing;
We have witnessed the horror caused by the use of chemical weapons; and

Global military spending grew to a reported US$1.686 trillion in 2016.

Let me state that again: 1.686 trillion dollars. This while millions live in extreme poverty, lack access to basic services and go hungry. While we increase spending on arms and defence, we fail to adequately secure our planet, our health, our well-being.

I therefore call on Member States to summon the political will to do more. We must show courage and exercise flexibility in order to advance the ultimate aim of ensuring a peaceful and secure environment, for all.

As you work on these issues in this Session, let us not hold positions for positions’ sake. Rather let us seek to be constructive, to reach out across the aisles. Let us deliver concrete outcomes that will make a difference in the lives of the people we represent here.

Mr. Chair, dear delegates, as you work in a transparent and timely manner to complete your agenda, I assure you of my support and that of my team.

I count on you. Our peoples dream of your success. Thank you.