Mr Chairman,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your Chairmanship of the First Committee of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I have every confidence that you will lead us towards fruitful and effective deliberations this year. I also wish to express our appreciation to other Members of the Bureau and the Secretariat for their continuous support and cooperation.

2. Malaysia associates itself with the statement delivered by the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement
Mr. Chairman,

3. Against the backdrop of a dynamic geopolitical landscape, as well as multi-faceted security threats emanating from States and non-State actors, we undertake these important deliberations to address the way forward vis-à-vis general and complete disarmament.

4. Specifically, nuclear disarmament has been on the global agenda since the establishment of the United Nations. Although this objective was highlighted in the first ever General Assembly resolution in 1946, minimal, if not negligible, progress has been made since.

5. In this connection, Malaysia reaffirms unequivocally that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament agenda. Malaysia continues to call for total and complete disarmament of nuclear weapons, for so long as these weapons remain in existence, they pose unimaginable threats to humanity. As Chair of the Third
Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, Malaysia will work very closely with all States Parties of the NPT and relevant stakeholders in laying the groundwork to ensure that the 2020 Review Conference makes tangible progress.

6. As highlighted in the Disarmament Agenda of the Secretary-General entitled “Securing Our Common Future”, global progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons has been greatly compromised by the inability of multilateral organizations to bridge chasms dividing the principal players.

7. It was in the face of this long-standing deadlock on nuclear disarmament that 122 Member States resorted to decisive action by voting in favour of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

8. This reflects the political determination of a sizeable proportion of the UN member states that nuclear weapons are categorically unacceptable and must be eliminated. However, the effectiveness of the Treaty, and the achievement of its intended goals, are contingent upon the accession of all concerned parties.
Mr Chairman,

9. The challenging uncertainties of the global landscape today demand that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) live up to its role as the world’s pre-eminent platform for multilateral disarmament negotiations. Given this pressing necessity, measures to revitalize the CD are urgently needed, including through the effective execution of an agreed Programme of Work. In this regard, Malaysia welcomes the establishment of five subsidiary bodies by the CD in February 2018.

10. Following General Assembly Resolution 72/49, adopted in December 2017, Malaysia supports efforts to convene the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV), as well as a High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, at the earliest opportunity. These platforms are imperative to maintain the sustained attention of the international community, at the highest levels of government, on the disarmament agenda.
Mr. Chairman,

11. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) is pivotal in achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament. It is essential for Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States in such zones. As a state party to the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, Malaysia will continue to support ASEAN’s efforts in urging the NWS to accede to the protocol as soon as possible, as proof of their support towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Malaysia hopes that a nuclear-weapon-free zone would be established in the Middle East, and implores all relevant parties to take concerted action towards its realisation.

12. Malaysia will also continue its long-standing practice of submitting to the First Committee the draft resolution entitled ‘Follow-up to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons’. We count on the support of all Member States, and welcome States wishing to co-sponsor this resolution.
13. At the same time, it should be highlighted that the expeditious entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is also of pressing concern. Hence Malaysia calls upon all States, particularly those in the ‘Annex 2’ category, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Mr Chairman,

14. Malaysia is heartened by the easing of tensions in the Korean Peninsula. We also welcome the convening of the three inter-Korean Summits this year, the most recent of which took place in Pyongyang from 18 to 20 September 2018. At this important juncture, we call on all parties to work together and cooperate towards reconciliation, to pave the way for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Towards this end, we continue to believe that all UNSC resolutions related to the DPRK must be fully implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

15. As to the use of the VX nerve agent at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 in February 2017, the Malaysian High Court has pronounced, on 16 August 2018, that both the accused, an
Indonesian and a Vietnamese national, should enter their defence. This follows the prosecution's successful establishment of a *prima facie* case against them from the evidence presented in the High Court. The accused will take the stand to defend themselves once trial resumes on 1st November 2018 in the Malaysian High Court. The trial is expected to conclude in the first quarter of 2019.

16. Since the incident, Malaysia has been providing regular updates to the Executive Council Meeting of the OPCW as we strive to remain transparent, cooperative and steadfast in sharing all relevant developments.

Mr. Chairman,

17. Malaysia is currently in the process of adopting a Biological Weapons Bill, pursuant to Article IV of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and is undertaking internal consultations on the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

18. Recognising the imminent threats posed by "illicit manufacture transfer", and circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), Malaysia calls for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action of SALW and the International Tracing
Instrument by strengthening international cooperation and assistance.

Mr Chairman,

19. Malaysia looks forward to constructive deliberations on these issues, which are of great concern to the international community. Notwithstanding the considerable challenges confronting us, let us strengthen our resolve to advance the cause of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, for the preservation of international peace and security.

Thank you.