STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. GEORGI PANAYOTOV, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Mr. Chair,

Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania, as well as all members of the Bureau on assuming the stewardship of this year’s session of the First Committee. Please be assured of my delegation’s full support in your endeavors in steering the Committee’s work to a successful outcome. I would like to take this opportunity to thank last year’s chair Ambassador Mohammed Bahr Aluloom of Iraq for his tireless work during the 72nd session of the General Assembly.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union on 8 October, now I would like to outline a few points of importance to my country.

Mr. Chair, the current international security situation is more than challenging. Recent developments have demonstrated that multilateralism is at risk, and at the same time it is only through multilateralism that the challenges that we are all facing can be successfully addressed. In this regard, we welcome the Secretary General’s Agenda for Disarmament as it offers a much needed all-encompassing approach integrating the whole UN system.

Unfortunately, since last year we have witnessed several new cases of use of chemical weapons and chemical substances not only in Syria but most recently in Salisbury, the UK. This is not only concerning, but puts at jeopardy the very norm against the use of such weapons established by CWC. Bulgaria condemns in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons. No such action should be left without consequences and all perpetrators should be held accountable.

The recent developments in the Korean Peninsula are encouraging. Those first steps, however, need to be followed by DPRK’s engagement in negotiations that will lead to a complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization. We call upon DPRK to fully comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions.
The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear program concluded in July 2015 remains of historic significance. As confirmed by the most recent IAEA report, Iran continues to implement its nuclear related commitments. The JCPOA continues to be of great importance for regional and global stability and we encourage all parties to the JCPOA to strictly abide by its terms.

Bulgaria reiterates its commitment to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We firmly believe that any advance in nuclear disarmament is only possible within the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and namely Article VI. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the framework for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Therefore, no efforts should be spared to achieve a successful outcome of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

A constructive, realistic and gradual approach, based on practical and implementable measures, building blocks that will strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, is the only feasible one. This approach encompasses bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, overcoming the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, including through its enlargement; starting negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). In this regard, it is worth noting that the Conference on Disarmament established five subsidiary bodies earlier this year and this resulted in the adoption of four substantive reports which hopefully would serve as basis for its work in 2019.

Mr. Chair,

Achieving progress in the area of conventional weapons is of equal importance.

We welcome the outcome of the 2018 Third Review Conference on the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The outcome document provides a good basis to guide our efforts into further strengthening the global regime against the illicit trade in SALW and to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, amongst others.

The universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty remains a priority for my country. The international norm on responsible trade in arms set by ATT plays an important role in preventing atrocities, curbing terrorism and promoting international security.

Mr. Chair,
The vulnerability of cyberspace is no longer an emerging threat. It is a real threat and requires our immediate attention. We do need new rules to respond to the new challenges. In this regard, Bulgaria supports the development of universal norms and principles of responsible behavior of States in cyberspace and confidence-building measures.

Mr. Chair,

Let me conclude by reiterating that only through multilateralism and reaffirmation of the rule-based approach can we overcome the challenges we are currently facing.

Thank you!