Statement by Counsellor Sun Lei
of the Chinese Delegation at the Thematic Discussion
on Nuclear Disarmament at the First Committee
of the 73rd Session of the UNGA

Mr. Chairman,

Currently, the international strategic security environment is undergoing profound and complicated changes. With increasing uncertainties and instabilities, the international process of nuclear arms control has come to a crucial crossroad. In the view of China, the international community should bear the responsibility of building a community with shared future for mankind, follow the principles of "maintaining global strategic stability" and "undiminished security for all", and make joint efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and strengthen international peace and security.

Firstly, we should actively pursue a new concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. We should fully respect and accommodate the legitimate and reasonable security concern of each country, endeavor to create a peaceful and stable international security environment, so as to eliminate the root causes of nuclear proliferation through the achievement of common security of all countries.

Secondly, we should firmly safeguard the authority of existing arms control and disarmament regimes, such as the NPT review process and the Conference on Disarmament. Although they are not perfect, these regimes represent the greatest common denominator accepted by all countries, because they are based on rules, strike a balance between rights and
obligations, and follow the principle of fair participation by all countries. On these regimes, no country should use whatever that suits their interests and abandon whatever that does not.

Thirdly, countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and primary responsibilities for nuclear disarmament. They should earnestly comply with the treaties already concluded on reduction of nuclear weapons and further drastically and substantively reduce their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is an important treaty on arms control and disarmament between the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. It has played an important role in easing the international relations, moving forward the nuclear disarmament process and safeguarding global strategic balance and stability. It is still highly relevant today. We hope that the relevant country can cherish the hard-won outcomes achieved over the years, prudently and properly handle the issues related to the treaty through dialogue and consultation and think twice before withdrawing from the treaty.

Fourthly, the willingness and rights of non-nuclear-weapon States to be free from nuclear war threat must be respected. Policies and measures like preemptive strike and development of low yield warheads may lead to higher risk of using nuclear weapons, lowering the threshold of using nuclear weapons, and raising the risk of nuclear war. These policies and measures should all be abandoned as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, adhering to the nuclear strategy of self-defense. China has consistently adhered to the commitment of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and kept its nuclear force at the minimal level required by national security.
China has always actively supported the international nuclear disarmament efforts, carried out the relevant international obligations in good faith, and taken practical actions to promote the nuclear disarmament process.

China has attached great importance to and actively participated in the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). China has been strictly fulfilling its treaty obligations, seriously implementing the review outcomes, and committed to maintaining and enhancing the authority, universality and effectiveness of the Treaty. China has assumed the coordinator of the P5 cooperation process, and will actively arrange P5 activities to strive for positive progress on Treaty review process.

China has always supported the purposes and objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, honors its commitment to moratorium on nuclear test, and endeavors to promote the early entry into force of the Treaty. Since last year, a batch of IMS monitoring stations in China have been certified by the PTS, which highlights China’s firm commitment to the Treaty.

China has always taken a positive attitude towards the Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). We believe that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is the sole and most appropriate venue for the negotiation of such a treaty. China supports the commencement of the negotiation on FMCT in the CD on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced program of work and the mandate contained in the Shannon Report. China actively participated in the discussions in the United Nations High-Level Expert Preparatory Group as well as in the CD and its relevant Subsidiary Body, and made positive contribution to the outcomes of relevant mechanisms.

China has attached importance to nuclear disarmament verification, bearing in mind that adequate and effective verification measures constitute significant technical guarantee to the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China has constructively participated in the work of the UN Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of
verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. We support the GGE to work strictly in accordance with the mandate of relevant UN resolution and in a positive and steady manner.

China is ready to work together with the international community to make unremitting efforts for achieving the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.