Mr. Chairman,

The General Assembly has long recognized that global peace and security depends, in large measure, on stability at the regional and sub-regional levels. In view of this inextricable relationship between regional stability and international peace, the UN Charter acknowledges and provides for regional arrangements to ensure global peace and security. In the post-Cold War era, most threats to peace and security arise mainly among States located in the same region or sub-region. International and bilateral efforts towards disarmament and arms control, therefore, are reinforced and complemented by regional approaches towards this end.

The Final Document of SSOD-I, the UN Disarmament Commission and this Committee's resolutions have repeatedly reaffirmed the need for the simultaneous pursuit of regional and global approaches including agreements in the area of disarmament and arms limitation. The international community has endorsed through these mechanisms and normative framework two well-recognized and tested tools, i.e. conventional arms control and confidence-building measures, particularly at the regional and sub-regional levels.

The resources being expended on arms and weapons systems can be devoted to economic and social development and to the protection of the environment for the benefit of all peoples. Several regions of the world have benefitted from the application of principles and guidelines in the areas of conventional arms control and evolved appropriate CBMs.

It is important to recall and reiterate some of the relevant core principles agreed by the UN, which include: preservation of balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces; the special responsibility of militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security; undiminished security; and pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner.

Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should accord priority to addressing the most destabilizing military capabilities and imbalances in both conventional and non-conventional spheres. In regions characterized by tensions and disputes, achieving a stable balance of conventional forces and weapons through cooperative regional initiatives is imperative.

Mr. Chairman,
CBMs have proved their efficacy over the years at regional and sub-regional levels, especially in the area of arms control and disarmament. They also have a positive correlation with international peace and security.

As the General Assembly resolutions and UNDC guidelines have affirmed, CBMs at the regional level have to be tailored to the specifics of the region and should begin with simple arrangements on transparency, openness, and risk reduction, before the concerned States find themselves in a position to pursue more substantive arms control and disarmament measures.

CBMs are significant in that they can lead to the creation of favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of existing disputes and to facilitate the solution of any situation which might lead to international friction. However, CBMs should not become an end in themselves.

These measures should be pursued in conjunction with sincere efforts for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter. They can significantly contribute towards a global political environment conducive to promoting international agreements on disarmament and arms limitation.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan feels privileged to have spearheaded initiatives on regional disarmament, conventional arms control, and CBMs at the UN for several years now. A practical expression of Pakistan’s commitment towards promoting these globally agreed goals is reflected through the resolutions which Pakistan tables every year in the First Committee which include resolutions on:

(1) Regional disarmament;

(2) Confidence building measures in the regional and sub-regional context; and

(3) Conventional arms control at regional and sub-regional levels.

As in previous years, Pakistan delegation has tabled these three draft resolutions which recognize the significance of regional approaches to arms control, disarmament and confidence building for international peace and stability, and the complementarity between regional and global approaches. We look forward to the continued support of Member States for the adoption of these resolutions this year as well.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.