STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you and your bureau for your election to the Chairmanship of this committee. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation in this session of work.

Afghanistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

We still live a world in which international peace and security remains fragile, countries continue to increase their military budgets, and the problem of nuclear disarmament remains as real and as complex as ever before. This current situation warrants a renewed focus on behalf of all stakeholders: the United Nations, other international institutions, and Member States alike, to ensure a systematic decrease in the proliferation of nuclear arms.

As such, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remain key elements of the international architecture to achieve this goal. As a country that is party to both the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), among other multilateral treaties, Afghanistan reiterates its call for the elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We hope that States Parties will demonstrate a new level of cooperation to ensure a successful 2020 NPT Review Conference.

We maintain the position that multilateral diplomacy is of crucial importance to advancing the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. Achieving a nuclear-free world can only be possible through collective action and cooperation. We hope the relevant situations that remain outstanding will be resolved in a steady and decisive manner.
Furthermore, my delegation reiterates our strong support for the establishment of the Middle East as a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Last year, the Secretary-General presented his new disarmament agenda. The scope of this agenda will be beneficial as we redouble efforts to implement more effective controls to prevent the flow of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. We know from our own experience that the easy access and abundance of small arms and light weapons empowers terrorists, violent extremists and organised criminal groups.

Over the past year, the people of Afghanistan, together with our national security forces and the military and civilian personnel of international partner countries have been subject to new high-profile attacks by terrorist and extremist groups in different parts of the country.

The use of small arms and light weapons during these attacks highlights how the lack of efficient arms control constitutes a destructive element in fuelling the cycle of violence in our region. As such, more effective control of small arms is an important element of broader efforts to promote stability in all conflict zones. This is an issue to which Afghanistan attaches high priority.

We call upon all relevant parties to take full responsibility for controlling the access of precursors and weapons to terrorist organisations and also to enhance efforts to build national capacity for the implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Moreover, in the context of the conflict in Afghanistan and elsewhere, we need more steady progress in addressing the dangerous nexus of
organized criminal activities, including illicit weapons, drug trafficking and money laundering.

Mr Chairman,

This year again, Afghanistan has remained the country that is most affected by the indiscriminate and unlawful use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). IEDs remain a lethal weapon often used by terrorists operating in Afghanistan. Last year alone, IED attacks by such groups resulted in thousands of innocent lives lost, including women, children and the elderly. The victims of IED attacks are broad, spanning different segments of society and also including members of our national security forces and international military and civilian personnel serving in Afghanistan to support our efforts to achieve security and stability.

The use of IEDs has also complicated efforts with respect to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need.

In Afghanistan, we are combating the threat of IEDs as part of our broad national security strategy, which also covers counter-terrorism efforts. Despite our efforts, the main factor of the use of IEDs in Afghanistan is due to the continued use of precursors such as TNT, C3, C4 and Ammonium Nitrate – which are illegally trafficked into and used in Afghanistan by a nexus of transnational criminal networks.

IEDs have become the primary weapon for non-state armed groups across many conflicts around the world. Addressing this threat will not be achieved without more decisive on the part of all States and other international actors.

Afghanistan’s strong commitment to countering the threat of IEDs is reflected by our sponsorship of the General Assembly Resolution on “Countering the Threat Posed by Improvised Explosive Devices” since 2015. We appreciate the broad support provided to this resolution by the international community and thank Australia and France, in
particular, as the main co-sponsors of this important document. We look forward to the adoption of the next resolution during the 75th Session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to assure you of my delegation’s constructive engagement throughout the discussions of the First Committee.

I thank you for your attention.