Mr Chair,

Fiji would like to congratulate you and members of the Committee on your appointments. Your Committee has my delegation's full support and our best wishes for this session.

Fiji aligns its statement with that made by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Fiji is committed to supporting the UN in its efforts to maintain International Peace and Security. The work of the First Committee is very important. Disarmament and Arms control form the cornerstone of International Peace and Security. We see around the world today varying degrees of
commitment to major international disarmament and arms control mechanisms.

The global environment faces a growing challenge of weakening consensus and declining trust. Mistrust has resulted in erosion of confidence in international disarmament mechanisms. This trust deficit in the International arena needs to be overcome. This is when the UN is needed the most. The success of this Committee is so fundamental therefore.

One result of this growing mistrust in the global environment is the proliferation of arms and weapons that bypass these arms control mechanisms - causing much suffering across many parts of the world.
Mr Chair.

We, the member states gave ourselves 2030, as the target by which we should achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

These goals are unachievable without peace and security. Peace and security are essential building blocks for development – sustainable development. The fulfilment of the objectives of international disarmament and arms control mechanisms are essential to providing an environment where peace can thrive, and the development needs of communities fulfilled.

Fiji and other Pacific islands have been at the forefront in calling for an end to nuclear weapons testing. This resulted in the Treaty of Rarotonga, which entered into force on 11th December 1986. This treaty created the ‘South Pacific
Nuclear Weapon Free Zone - only the second Nuclear Free Weapon Zone treaty in the world.

There were more than 300 nuclear weapons tests conducted in the Pacific; atmospheric, below surface and underground. Dumping of nuclear waste, storage of nuclear materials remains pressing challenges. The effect of nuclear testing is still being felt in the form of environmental degradation, and growing health challenges by the Pacific peoples. The long-term impacts of weapons testing on food, and marine ecology are a growing concern across the Pacific.

Pacific Communities close to the test sites are experiencing acute health problems arising from their slow exposure to radiation over many years. The stability of atoll structures is being question by some. Compensation mechanisms and the study of long-term impacts of tests and storage are in their infancy.
Fiji has only recently managed to provide compensation to test veterans who were deliberately deployed to observe nuclear tests.

All these reminds us daily why the world needs to comply with the non-proliferation frameworks.

Mr Chair

Armed conflicts and wars are becoming more deadly. Large percentages of populations around the world continue to be displaced due to armed conflicts. The widespread proliferation of light, arms through illegal means are a threat to international peace and security. They are a catalyst for conflicts. Climate change and its impacts to water safety for example worsen the security context in many regions. Local conflicts are only too quick to become regional and international conflicts.
Despite international arms control mechanisms, the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition has worsened. That is why the work of this Committee is so vital.

Mr Chair,

The development of Information Technology has opened great opportunities for humanity. Communication and the ‘internet of things’ are an essential part of life in most parts of the world. Connectivity has become the new normal.

Widespread connectivity has at the same time increased our vulnerability. State fragility and vulnerability has been enhanced by cyber-crime in a growing number of cases. There needs to be a collective response to this to ensure that internet promotes development – not undermine it. The freedom allowed by the Net need to be balanced with far greater responsibly by state parties and by individuals.
This is a huge challenge. But we need to get this right. Otherwise this will have a negative impact on societies-creating tensions which will fuel, amplify and exacerbate existing conflicts and/or create new conflicts. We have time and again suffered great heartaches when so many of people have lost lives because of internet fuelled hatred.

Fiji welcomes the work of the Group of Government Experts and the Open-Ended Working Group on ICT and looks forward to its recommendations.

Mr Chair

Progress in disarmament can only happen in an environment of confidence, transparency, and trust. Nuclear Weapons states need to abide by the commitments that they have made. The world does not need nuclear weapons. The promise and hope of nuclear disarmament remain- unfulfilled.
Mr Chair

Fiji has strived to ratify the various treaties and honor its international obligations.

Fiji has signed to all treaties related to Nuclear Disarmament and weapons of mass destruction. Fiji is in the process of ratifying the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which it has signed on to, in 2017.

Fiji re-affirms its commitment to supporting all efforts by the UN to make real disarmament and arms control a reality.

Vinaka Vakalevu and Thank You.