Statement by Turkey
General Debate of the First Committee
74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
14 October 2019

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to join others in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election. I would also like to express our delegation’s full support for your endeavors.

Turkey aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We attach importance to this Committee and welcome that it could start its work. We hope the issue that brought us to a vote will be solved soon.

We are meeting again at a time with ever-increasing risks. We are convinced that international cooperation is crucial to address global challenges. The security environment has deteriorated and that has led to an erosion of the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Trust among parties to the products of long negotiated agreements and treaties eroded. The use of chemical weapons has reappeared with no accountability. Our efforts must be directed to bringing an end to the division on how to proceed with disarmament. Despite challenges, our collective endeavor is to find ways to advance disarmament, while considering different views. First Committee is the platform to do exactly that.

Mr. Chairman,

Next year, NPT 2020 Review Conference will convene at the 50th anniversary of the NPT’s entry into force. Turkey will work for a successful outcome of the Review Conference. We support a strengthened and universalized NPT as well as all its three pillars. Concrete progress for the full implementation of Article VI with the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons is needed. We should bear in mind the implications of the existing situation between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states on the fragile security environment. It is important not to use a rhetoric regarding use of nuclear weapons especially during crisis.

Turkey strongly supports progress on the decision on convening a conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of WMD and their delivery systems.

Together with our NPDI partners we are committed to strengthening the implementation of the NPT, based on the 2010 Action Plan.

We affirm that a universal and effectively verifiable Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) constitutes a fundamental instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We reaffirm the vital importance and urgency of the entry into force of the CTBT. We urge the
remaining Annex-II States, whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the CTBT, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Mr Chairman,

Turkey expresses its continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We are determined to continue working with the international community to preserve the JCPOA, which was unanimously endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231(2015).

We would like to reiterate that we are concerned about the ongoing developments in the framework of the JCPOA. We believe that, challenges to the full implementation of the agreement serve neither to regional and international security, nor to the non-proliferation regime.

We reiterate the ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) are violations of UNSC resolutions. Turkey supports a diplomatic solution to the problem of DPRK’s nuclear and ballistic missile program. Turkey welcomes inter-Korean talks as well as the dialogue between the US and DPRK. We wish that recent talks will bring full and verifiable denuclearization and lasting peace to the Korean Peninsula. In this context, we urge the DPRK to sign and ratify the CTBT as a matter of priority.

We reiterate our call for the commencement of the negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear weapon states have a special responsibility in the area of arms control and nuclear disarmament. Two nuclear weapon States with the largest arsenals have concluded major bilateral treaties. Unfortunately, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) has ceased to exist due to continued development and deployment of weapons systems. INF was an important element of the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region.

We would like to encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals. We hope the discussions about the following steps to be taken post New Start Treaty will be successful.

Turkey reiterates that the use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity, a violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Security Council resolutions. The firm and wide rejection of impunity in the use of chemical weapons has led to the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the State Parties of the CWC, where the Secretariat was called upon to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators for the use of CW in Syria.

In this context, we welcome the establishment of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team and we extend every support to its work. We also commend the work being conducted by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation.
and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

We should also strive to strengthen international cooperation in the field of conventional weapons. Every year more than 500,000 people are killed by small arms and light weapons. We are committed to the effective implementation and strengthening of the Program of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. Arms Trade Treaty is an important instrument in this area as well.

Mr. Chairman,

In this environment, it is necessary to return to a cooperation-based security understanding. As our President stated in his UNGA speech: “Nobody is secure, unless we are all living in security”. In this respect, our deliberations here should focus on ways to find common ground, with a sincere effort to understand each other and to compromise for the benefit of international security. Upholding the existing treaties, agreements and SC resolutions remain key to our endeavors.

Thank you.