Thank you, President.

Humanitarian concerns have driven many of this year’s developments in disarmament. Indeed, First Committee interventions from states, international organizations, and civil society alike will highlight the need to protect civilians from weapons of war.

Humanitarian disarmament is an effective tool to overcoming obstacles and achieving progress in this area. A people-centered approach to disarmament, it focuses on the security of individuals and communities rather than states. In particular, it seeks to prevent and remediate arms-inflicted human and environmental harm through the establishment and implementation of norms.

To achieve its goals, humanitarian disarmament prohibits and restricts weapons and weapons-related activities. It also requires interventions to assist victims and reduce the immediate and long-term impacts of arms.

I will highlight a few examples of the role humanitarian disarmament has played in 2019.

Most recently, 133 states along with international and nongovernmental organizations convened for the Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare. Participants were deeply concerned by the pattern of civilian harm caused by the bombing and shelling of towns and cities, and the vast majority agreed to pursue negotiations of a new political declaration to prevent and reduce such harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

A September signing ceremony brought the total number of ratifications and accessions to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to 32, making it almost two-thirds of the way to entry into force. These endorsements show that states committed to humanitarian principles can take meaningful action towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

In early September, the president of the Ninth Meeting of States Parties described the Convention on Cluster Munitions as a “humanitarian imperative-driven legal instrument.” Thanks in large part to the convention, states parties have destroyed 99 percent of their stockpiles and the number of cluster munition casualties has dropped over the past few years.

Gender and gender-based violence (GBV) were the theme for this year’s Arms Trade Treaty meetings. In August, the Fifth Conference of States Parties adopted recommendations to address the gendered impact of the arms trade and improve implementation of the treaty’s GBV risk assessment criteria.
During discussions of lethal autonomous weapons systems, states parties to the Convention on Conventional Weapons emphasized the need to maintain human control over the use of force and not to delegate life-and-death decisions to machines.

In July, the UN’s International Law Commission adopted 28 draft principles on environmental protection in armed conflict. They recognize the humanitarian imperative to prevent environmental damage from conflict and to mitigate its effects on public health, ecosystems, and indigenous peoples.

Finally, in preparation for the Mine Ban Treaty’s Fourth Review Conference in November, the Norwegian minister of foreign affairs said, “The objectives of the Convention—to save lives, protect civilians, assist survivors, and promote sustainable development in affected areas—are as relevant as ever.” States should exhibit the political will and provide the funds necessary to fully realize these objectives.

Other events this year show that much work remains to be done to reduce the impacts of arms. We urge states to build on these positive developments and use humanitarian disarmament to ensure that progress on paper is translated into reality on the ground.

Thank you.

Statement endorsed by the following

**Global Coalitions**
- Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
- Control Arms
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition
- International Network on Explosive Weapons

**Other Organizations**
- Acronym Institute
- Action on Armed Violence
- African Council of Religious Leaders-Religions for Peace
- American Friends Service Committee
- Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative, Harvard Law School
- Article 36
- Campagna Italia Contro le Mine
- Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas
- Caribbean Coalition for Development and the Reduction of Armed Violence
- Conflict and Environment Observatory
- Human Rights Watch
- Humanity & Inclusion
- International Campaign for Robots Arms Control
• International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
• Landmines Resource Center, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Balamand
• Mines Action Canada
• Mines Advisory Group
• Nobel Women’s Initiative
• Norwegian People’s Aid
• PAX
• Project Ploughshares
• Protection
• Regional Network on Peace and Stability
• Scrapweapons.com
• Seguridad Humana en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (SEHLAC)
• Soka Gakkai International
• South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms
• Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
• World Federalist Movement-Canada