Mr. Chair,
Esteemed fellow panellist,
Distinguished delegates,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on commencing the substantive work of this Committee’s mandate.

You have limited time available for you to cover a broad swathe of issues, and I hope that you will use every opportunity to be as effective and efficient as possible. In this context, I welcome your willingness to impose strict time limitations and to abide by them.

In light of the state of global affairs and the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, you must make the most of the time you have.
Since 2004, the Chair of the First Committee has invited the head of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to participate in an exchange with the Committee on follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted at the previous session and on presentation of the reports of the Secretary-General. It has been the practice since 2016 to refrain from providing detailed statistical information in these remarks. I will again refrain from doing so this year. Instead, you will find those details on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in an annex to this statement, which will be posted online.

On the second, during the general debate I articulated my views on the current state of affairs, steps taken – forward and backward – and Member States’ roles in preserving the rules-based order.

Some of those points bear repeating. I remain extremely concerned about the current situation surrounding disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The disarmament and non-proliferation regime is, at best, fraying and, at worst, collapsing.

Delegates to the First Committee, Member States of the United Nations, have a responsibility to all peoples of the world and, not least to their own, to create a safer and more secure world.
As the Secretary-General said to the General Assembly at the opening of the current session: “The General Assembly is a unique and indispensable forum where the world can come together to advance on sensitive and important issues” and “People’s expectations . . . are profound.” It is in this spirit and with this recognition of shared responsibility that I hope this Committee will take forward its work.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome the opportunity today to have this exchange with a representative from one regional group.

There are many regional dimensions to the work of the First Committee, and it is regrettable that today’s panel does not include voices from across different regional groups. My Office remains fully engaged at the regional and sub-regional levels, in particular through our offices in Togo, Peru and Nepal and the vital work they undertake in areas as diverse as ammunition stockpile management, gender inclusion and women’s empowerment in disarmament efforts, and implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004).

Regional approaches to disarmament are an integral component of the UN disarmament toolkit. They reinforce norms and principles, complement multilateral treaties and regimes, and tailor approaches in disarmament to local contexts.

Take, for example, nuclear-weapon-free zones. These zones contain some of the strictest provisions against nuclear weapons and, taken together, have made the entire Southern Hemisphere effectively free of these terrible weapons.
Another excellent recent example has been the consultations undertaken with regional organizations in the context Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. These consultations have allowed the GGE to take advantage of and draw best practice from innovations taking place in regional bodies, including confidence-building measures and norm implementation.

As the Secretary-General notes in his Disarmament Agenda, *Securing Our Common Future*, the UN and regional organizations should work together to strengthen existing platforms for regional dialogue on security and arms control.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I want to conclude by reiterating my urgent request that you make the best use of the time available to you for the remainder of the Committee’s session to achieve truly meaningful outcomes. My Office continues to stand ready to support Member States’ ongoing efforts across the Committee’s vast and complex areas of work.

Trust and confidence are currently in short supply, and they will not be restored without concerted effort by all. They require dialogue, negotiation and the rebuilding of a spirit of cooperation. This is hard work, especially in today’s environment, but it is by far better than the alternative.

Thank you.