Mr. Chairman,

1. The General Assembly has long recognized that international peace and security is co-dependent on stability at the regional and sub-regional levels. In view of this inextricable relationship, the UN Charter acknowledges the value of regional arrangements to ensure global peace and security. In the post-Cold War era, most threats to peace and security arise mainly among States located in the same region or sub-region. International efforts towards disarmament and arms control, therefore, are reinforced and complemented by regional approaches towards this end.

2. The Final Document of SSOD-I, the UN Disarmament Commission, and this Committee's resolutions have repeatedly reaffirmed the need for the simultaneous pursuit of regional and global approaches including agreements in the area of disarmament and arms limitation. The international community has endorsed through these mechanisms and normative frameworks two well-recognized and tested tools, i.e. conventional arms control and Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), particularly at the regional and sub-regional levels.

3. Several regions of the world have benefitted from the application of principles and guidelines in the areas of conventional arms control and evolved appropriate CBMs. It is important to recall and reiterate some of the relevant core principles agreed by the UN in this regard, which include: (i) preservation of balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces; (ii) the special responsibility of militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security; (iii) undiminished security; and (iv) pursuit of disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner.

4. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should accord priority to addressing the most destabilizing military capabilities and imbalances in both conventional and non-conventional spheres. In regions characterized by tensions and disputes, achieving a stable balance of conventional forces through cooperative regional initiatives is imperative.

5. As the General Assembly resolutions and UNDC guidelines have affirmed, CBMs at the regional level have to be tailored to the specifics of the region and should begin with simple arrangements on transparency, openness, and risk reduction, before the concerned States find themselves in a position to pursue more substantive arms control and disarmament measures.
6. Mutually agreed CBMs can lead to the creation of favourable conditions; however, they should not become an end in themselves. Over the long term, CBMs should also contribute towards conflict resolution. However, if with passage of time the conflicts continue to fester then the CBMs may lose their efficacy.

Mr. Chairman,

7. South Asia faces certain distinct challenges arising from the hegemonic pretensions of one regional country. This country, while continuing to acquire destabilizing strategic and conventional capabilities, and developing offensive military doctrines, refuses to engage in a bilateral dialogue on confidence building and risk reduction. It highlights the need, more than ever before, to recognize the clear and present danger posed by such developments. Not just to Pakistan, but to regional and international peace and security.

8. Pakistan desires peace. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without resolving the underlying disputes; without agreeing on reciprocal measures for strategic restraint; and without instituting a balance between conventional forces. Our proposals in that regard remain on the table. Pakistan is open towards any bilateral or regional initiative that builds confidence, that reduces risks, and that conforms to the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Pakistan feels privileged to have spearheaded initiatives on regional disarmament, conventional arms control, and CBMs at the UN for several years now. A practical expression of Pakistan’s commitment towards promoting these globally agreed goals is reflected through the resolutions which Pakistan tables every year in the First Committee on:

   (1) Regional disarmament;
   (2) Confidence building measures in the regional and sub-regional context; and
   (3) Conventional arms control at regional and sub-regional levels.

10. As in previous years, Pakistan delegation has tabled these three draft resolutions which recognize the significance of regional approaches to arms control, disarmament and confidence building for international peace and stability, and the complementarity between regional and global approaches. We look forward to the continued support of Member States for the adoption of these resolutions this year as well.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.