Mr. Chair,

The Philippines associates itself with the statement of Myanmar on behalf of ASEAN and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Philippines concurs with the Secretary General’s Disarmament Agenda, as it notes that at the level of international organizations, existing disarmament institutions require serious reinvigoration. We regret that the key institutions of the Disarmament Machinery have been encountering difficulties not only for Member States to produce consensus outcome documents but also to adopt their programs of work. This situation is very striking particularly in the case of the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament, and now the First Committee.

A possible reason for these difficulties is not only the machinery itself but the widening divide between Member States themselves, as they firmly adhere to entrenched positions. Unfortunately, outstanding issues that prevent us from moving forward are in fact bilateral in nature or involve a small number of delegations. As these issues intertwine with procedural issues, we are led to a deadlock in our work. Such deadlock distracts us from the real work of reviewing our disarmament commitments and making sure that these are implemented with all seriousness.

It is of course important to improve coordination among the disarmament organs and the integration of expertise into their work. There is also a need to continue building partnerships, as we advocate stronger collaboration among partner States, international organizations, NGOs, and research institutions to pursue and expand relevant initiatives. It is also necessary to sustain the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and to ensure its independence and credibility.

An important aspect of our work to improve the Disarmament Machinery is the mainstreaming of gender issues in the disarmament processes. Thus, my delegation also aligns itself with the statement of Canada on behalf of a cross-regional group of Member States. The Philippines, as a champion of women’s rights and empowerment, strongly supports calls for increased gender balance in the disarmament process, within the NPT, and arms control, and would like to see enhanced efforts in this regard.
At the national level, the Philippines continues to implement its National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security of 2017-2022 through a multi-sectoral approach. The Action Plan supports the appointment of women in strategic positions of leadership, especially in peace processes, and the active participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. In addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the Action Plan ensures that the process is gender-balanced. Both in the grassroots and policy-making levels, women are involved in the Mindanao Peace Process, which includes disarmament of belligerent groups.

Mr. Chair,

A reinvigorated disarmament machinery indeed requires a holistic approach that factors in the crucial role of multilateralism and the maintenance and strengthening of universal norms through meaningful dialogue and mutual trust.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.