Mr. Chairman,

1. I would like to congratulate you once again for your election to preside the First Committee of the General Assembly and your predecessor Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi the permanent representative of Libya for presiding the last session. Likewise, I would like to extend our congratulations to other Members of the Bureau for their election. Let me assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation.

2. At the outset, I would also like to associate Egypt’s with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, and the statement of the Arab Group. I am honored to present the following brief remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

3. As nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority, resolution A/RES/68/32 on the Follow-up to the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, provides a solid base for the realization of this objective. It charts a road map towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The First committee should be ready to contribute its part in deliberating on the implementation of this road map. We welcome in this regard the issuance of the Secretary General’s report containing the views of Member States, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

4. The call has been for the negotiation of this Convention in the Conference on Disarmament (DC), as the sole negotiating forum on disarmament affairs. As the United Nations Secretary General reminded us before that the problem with the disarmament machinery, the CD foremost, is with the driver and not the vehicle, the Secretary General’s report should now provide us with ample preparatory material to launch the negotiation of the Convention, thus enabling the CD to undertake its mission in this regard.

5. We look forward, in this regard, to an informed discussion of this seminal report. A clear substantive and procedural road map needs to be developed in this regard to
ensure a substantive outcome that contributes substantially to the objective of the international community to free the world from nuclear weapons, especially as we approach the 70th Anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, and of the only use of nuclear weapons, which serve as a reminder of their catastrophic consequence. Our discussion at the First Committee provides a timely opportunity to invigorate the disarmament machinery with this road map, which includes the convening, no later than 2018, of a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Egypt welcomes the continuing momentum in reviving the international debate on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the incompatibility of their possession and use with governing principles of international humanitarian law. We support the call of the “Nayarit’ Second Conference on “The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons” for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

7. We urge nuclear-weapon States, to actively take part in the third Conference in Austria. As possessors of nuclear weapons, they bear a special responsibility in avoiding any possibility of what would be a catastrophe.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The universalisation of the NPT is a step to achieve nuclear disarmament. The speedy establishment of nuclear weapon free zones adds impetus to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community has recognized the urgency of the establishment of a Zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet, despite these repeated calls, we are still faced with lack of progress in the implementation of both the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan on the Middle East. The 2010 action plan included operational timelines and specific proposals with mandates and timeframes. Evaluation of progress, or lack thereof, is hence an exercise of calculation and objective examination.

9. It is in this spirit, that the 2010 action plan itself recognized that the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East remains valid until its objectives are achieved, a call that needs to be fully upheld, and implemented in an accelerated mode, that compensates for the lost time. Egypt, along with the Members of the League of Arab States, have spared no effort in contributing their part to providing the necessary support for taking forward the process of the establishment of the Zone, as further demonstrated by the letters compiled in the Note by the Secretary-General A /68/781.
10. This First Committee also provides a timely opportunity to deliberate on translating the collective commitments into concrete steps of implementation, as we approach the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We should reiterate here that the 2010 Action plan is the floor and not the ceiling. The 2015 Conference is hence the platform not for rolling over 2010 commitments, nor for sufficing with evaluating the implementation of the 2010 commitments and accelerating the implementation for those remaining, but also serving as the launching pad for new forward looking commitments on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

11. This First Committee session is the first one after the completion of the 50 required ratification for commencing the process of entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, which was adopted by vote at the General Assembly. I take this opportunity to reiterate that Egypt is well aware of the effects of the illicit trafficking in conventional weapons. We are fully committed to exert all efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in arms. We urge all the countries that decide to accede to ATT, to implement it in good faith in order to achieve its purpose and goals. We will be following closely the developments regarding the accession to, entry into force and implementation of the Treaty in order to determine our final position.

12. The efforts of the international community should continue to fill in the remaining gaps. We continue to call for addressing the elements of over production and the ever increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons within major arms exporters and producers. We still believe that every effort must be exerted to bring production and stockpiles in major arms producing States under international scrutiny. International accountability is the only guarantee against the possible abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world. We had proposed related confidence building measures within the deliberations of the last session of the UNDC will be helping to address areas of concern relating to conventional weapons. These measures also included the need to addressing protracted threats to international peace and security. In this regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, to international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and to the core principles of the UN Charter itself than the crimes of aggression and foreign occupation which employ conventional arms arsenals to threaten and dominate peoples and deny them their most basic human rights.

13. The gaps are exacerbated by the advancement in conventional weapons. Egypt reiterates that technology should not overtake humanity. The potential or actual
development of Lethal Autonomous weapons raises many questions on their compliance with international humanitarian law, as well as issues of warfare ethics. Regulations should be put into place before such systems are to be developed and/or deployed.

14. While such sophistication of weapons is an added challenge, the ever continuing threat posed by the illicit traffic in small and light arms is one that should be addressed adequately. Egypt is fully committed to the full and effective implementation of the UN Program of Action of Small Arms and Light Weapons. We commend in this regard Ambassador Zahir Tanin, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, for the proficient chairmanship of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States held in June of 2014.

Mr. Chairman,

15. We trust that your able stewardship of the activities of the First Committee will lead us to progress further on a balanced agenda of disarmament and international security both on the fronts of weapons of mass destruction and conventional armaments.

16. We reiterate our support to you in this regard, and stand ready to contribute our part.

17. I thank you Mr. Chairman.