GEORGIA

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Statement by

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(Please check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. As we look forward to your competent and prudent leadership, allow me to assure you that the Georgian Delegation will support and assist you in all your important endeavors.

Mr. Chairman,

It is an honor and a privilege to address you here at the First Committee General Debate - a forum that has long been dedicated to the noble quest for a safer and more predictable world - and share with you our thoughts concerning the threats and risks we all face today.

One of the most important roles of the UN is to build consensus and political support among the member states over the threats we identify and the measures to counter them with. Nowadays, the threats and challenges to our security are asymmetric, complex, dynamic and transnational in nature.

As I speak, European security is being once again deliberately challenged by Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine. This latest worrisome pattern to forcibly alter international borders poses a serious threat to peace and stability and undermines the fundamental principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity. Georgia strongly condemns this direct military aggression and joins the international community in calling on Russia to withdraw all its military forces and hardware from Ukraine, including the Crimean region. As a victim of the 2008 invasion, Georgia knows all too well what Russian military aggression and occupation means. We reiterate our call on Russia to abide by its international obligations and end its illegal occupation of sovereign Georgian territory.

As we turn to the Middle East, we are likewise deeply distressed by the violent developments and rapid deterioration of the security situation in Iraq and Syria. We condemn in the strongest terms all despicable acts of terrorism and violence against civilian population. Terrorist groups such as ISIL threaten not only the nations in the Middle East but also in Europe, North America and in all other places across the globe. It is only with our joint efforts and commitment that we can stop, reverse and prevent such violent actions from happening.

Mr. Chairman,

The risk of nuclear terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the related materials and technologies has become one of the major challenges to our common security. In this regard, full compliance with the obligations under the relevant International arrangements, such as NPT, CWC, BWC, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 and etc. must stand out as main priorities for the International Community.

In this light, I would like to reiterate that despite a wide understanding that nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat to humanity, the NPT, as the cornerstone of the international nuclear nonproliferation system, still lacks significant elements to provide comprehensive response to the challenges we all face.
The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, as a vital instrument to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, must enter into force without further delay. On its part, Georgia continues to actively cooperate with the CTBTO Provisional Technical Secretariat to strengthen the monitoring and verification system.

Preventing the risk of nuclear terrorism and improving security by providing safe storage facilities for radioactive materials remain to be top priorities for Georgia. We have joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and strongly support consolidating efforts of the international community to combat illicit acquisition, retention, transportation, transfer and use of nuclear materials and radioactive substances.

Mr. Chairman,

We regret that the international disarmament fora, namely the Conference on Disarmament, continue to fail to fulfill their mandates. Undoubtedly, the Disarmament Conference should exercise a significantly greater influence and produce a larger impact in the field of its competence, especially in view of the current international security environment.

To match this objective, we all have to do our utmost in order to promote revitalization of this unique forum for negotiations, which played a crucial role in elaborating several major international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. In this regard, we welcome the recent High-Level Meeting aimed at taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations within the CD. Georgia supports the UN Secretary-General in his call for action to reinvigorate the multilateral disarmament frameworks. Further procrastination may well lead to the dwindling confidence of the international community in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Georgia fully shares the common approaches of the international community regarding the problem of illicit trade in conventional arms. Uncontrolled dissemination and excessive accumulation of conventional arms and ammunition represent a serious threat to international peace and security.

If we want to effectively handle this serious problem, we should possess efficient export control mechanisms, including, most importantly, common export criteria. In this regard, I would like to inform you that in December 2013 Parliament of Georgia passed a new version of the Law of Georgia on Export and Import Control of Armaments, Military Equipment and Dual-use items which entered into force on October 1, 2014. Harmonization of Georgia’s legislation on strategic export control with the EU standards serves as an essential factor helping us to continue providing full compliance with our international obligations and commitments.

Georgia believes that the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, aimed at regulating international trade in conventional arms, is a historic diplomatic achievement and is indeed a “victory for the world’s people”. As a proud sponsor of the process that started in 2006, and as a signatory of the ATT as of September 25, 2014, Georgia is convinced that this binding legal instrument has the real potential to eradicate illicit arms trade, to genuinely contribute to the humanitarian objectives and, overall, to foster global peace and security. Talking of our joining important legal
frameworks, it is a great pleasure for me to announce that just a few days ago, on October 1, 2014, Parliament of Georgia ratified the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In order to facilitate comprehensive management of CBRN-related risks, in February 2014 the National CBRN Strategy of Georgia was endorsed that was a result of the inter-agency efforts directed towards elaborating a strategic document in the field of CBRN security.

Furthermore, Georgia actively cooperates with the European Union and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) within the framework of the CBRN Centres of Excellence, to promote an integrated CBRN approach across the area of South East Europe, the Caucasus, Moldova and Ukraine. With the aim to contribute to the success of this project the CBRN Regional Secretariat was opened and is successfully functioning in Georgia.

In this regard, I would like to announce a side event organized by the Government of Georgia in cooperation with UNICRI. The side event entitled “CBRN National Action Plans: meeting the challenges of international security” will be held on 29 October 2014 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM in Conference Room 8 (the General Assembly Building). All UN Member States are invited.

Mr. Chairman,

Along with the old threats that we have been facing for many years and decades, a new one- a cyber-attack - has recently emerged and is evolving rapidly. At this point, I doubt we have sufficient understanding of its potential impact on our interdependent world at this stage of globalization. Consequently, we lack necessary instruments to adequately respond to the challenges posed by cyber-attacks. Georgia believes that it is the duty of the United Nations and the First Committee to delve into this problem and, ultimately, contribute to providing a relevant platform, mechanisms and instruments for eradicating the cyber threat.

Mr. Chairman,

Now I want to go back to where I began and remind you in more detail of the alarming security situation in Georgia’s two regions which continue to remain under illegal Russian military occupation.

Against the background of Georgia’s declared policy aimed at normalizing relations with the Russian Federation and despite some tangible measures already undertaken by my Government in this direction, Russia continues its policy of escalating security situation in the occupied Georgian regions, and in the adjacent areas, and exercises discriminatory measures against Georgian population residing in those territories. The Russian Federation continues to exacerbate the already fragile situation through incessant militarization of the occupied Georgian regions, intrusions into the rest of Georgia’s airspace and frequent military exercises.

After the Sochi Olympic Games, the Russian occupation forces resumed the installation of barbwire fences and embankments along the occupation line in the Tskhinvali region. By now, the total length of installations has exceeded 50 km. In certain segments, the barbwire fences go far beyond the initial occupation line, intruding deeper into our territory. On the humanitarian
side of the issue, the installation of artificial obstacles along the occupation line significantly affects the livelihoods of the local population, divides families and communities, and prevents people-to-people contacts. As a result, many families had to abandon their properties left behind the barbwire fences. A set of discriminatory measures perpetrated against Georgian population includes ethnically targeted violence, destruction of property, indiscriminate shooting, prohibition of education in native Georgian language, heavy restrictions on the freedom of movement. The population residing in the occupied territories is deprived of their minimal safeguards for the protection of their rights provided by the international conventions.

Russia’s illegal military presence on our soil constitutes a flagrant violation of Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within her internationally recognized borders. By illegally occupying 20 percent of Georgia’s sovereign territory, Russia is in breach of its international obligations and commitments, including the provisions of the August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

We are convinced that it is time for the international community to stand up for the timeless principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Hence, the First Committee apart from being seized with elaborating initiatives and ideas to address the existing problems in the fields of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and nonproliferation should do its utmost to remedy the “conventional threats” to international, regional and national security that could potentially undermine the existing international system of nation-states.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.