STATEMENT

by

TURKEY

at

the THEMATIC DISCUSSION
on NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

of

the First Committee
of the 69th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

20 October 2014, New York
Mr Chairman,

Allow me to begin by reaffirming Turkey’s unwavering commitment to seeking a safer world - and to this end, creating conditions for a world without nuclear weapons. Turkey strongly encourages and supports all practical steps to achieve nuclear disarmament.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is “the essential foundation for the achievement of nuclear disarmament, the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the basis for the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology”.

The NPT regime is established on a “grand bargain”, with “disarmament”, “non-proliferation” and “peaceful use” being the three equal pillars. Commitment to the fulfilment of the respective legal and political obligations contained in all these three pillars of the NPT by its States Parties, nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states alike, should be reaffirmed and upheld.

As to nuclear disarmament, the primary responsibility lies with the nuclear weapon states. Special attention also needs to be given to the nuclear armed states outside the NPT regime. Turkey supports the calls for systematic, progressive and irreversible nuclear disarmament and encourages all states that possess nuclear weapons to take further practical steps in this direction.

We also urge those countries who remain outside the NPT, to immediately accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States without any conditions.

Mr Chairman,

An incremental approach through building blocks is a productive way to attain nuclear disarmament. An important confidence building measure, in this context, is the establishment of WMD-free zones.

Turkey supports the establishment of internationally recognized and effectively verifiable zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, wherever feasible. In this respect, we welcome the signing of the Protocol to the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (CANWFZ) by five nuclear weapon states, providing legally-binding assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Treaty parties. We encourage full ratification of the treaties and protocols of all five regional zones.

As for the Middle East, Turkey’s sheer pleasure after 2010 Review Conference turned into utter disappointment when the announcement was made for the postponement of the 2012 Middle East Conference. It is Turkey’s sincere expectation that the Conference takes place at the earliest convenience, since this initiative can prove to be not only an important confidence building measure in the Middle East at this critical stage, but also a significant stimulus to the NPT Review Process.

Transparency stands out as a significant vector of disarmament. We welcome, in this respect, the reports submitted by the nuclear weapon states to the NPT Review Conference and invite them to consider measures to ensure further transparency without compromising security.

The cessation of all nuclear weapon tests constitutes another important building block towards both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, we stress the centrality of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in achieving these objectives. Moratoria are certainly important confidence-building instruments. Yet, for an important issue like nuclear testing, legally binding treaties are indispensable.
The importance of this Treaty is all the more visible following the nuclear tests undertaken by the DPRK. The international community has spent enough time waiting for the CTBT to enter into force. We once again encourage all States, especially Annex-2 States, to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

Mr Chairman,

We would like to briefly touch upon the role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which has its own virtues. It is our firm belief that starting negotiations on Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty will be another significant building block, paving the way for parallel advances in the other core agenda items of the CD, namely the nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of arms race in outer space.

Unfortunately, the word “stalemate” has long been associated with this forum. Once successfully negotiated treaties, the Conference is today in a dire straits that requires a collective effort to be rectified. The CD needs to be revitalized so that it can assume substantive work and start negotiating as it has been mandated. We have addressed this issue in further detail under the agenda item on the disarmament machinery. On this occasion, we just would like to underline our firm conviction that the Conference possesses the mandate, membership and rules of procedure to discharge its functions and that the stalemate does not emanate from procedural matters.

Last but not the least, we would like to welcome statements delivered earlier by New Zealand and Australia on behalf of groups of countries on humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. We are pleased to observe the growing awareness about catastrophic consequences of possible use of nuclear weapons, which is a serious concern for all our countries. This issue has been the primary focus of the NPDI countries during our 8th Ministerial Meeting in Hiroshima last April. On this important topic, we refer ourselves to the points underlined in Hiroshima statement adopted by the Ministers at the end of the meeting. Having supported and actively participated in the Oslo and Nayarit Conferences, we are looking forward to making further contributions at the upcoming meeting in Vienna in December.

Thank you for your attention.