Mr. Chair,

I would like to congratulate the Bureau and you personally, Mr. Chair, for assuming the responsibility of coordinating the deliberations in the context of the First Committee during these unprecedented times, and wish you every success.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU and would like to contribute a few remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

The disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (ADN) edifice is under duress and collective efforts are urgently needed especially in light of the hurdles created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the destabilizing geopolitical challenges.

Multilateralism, with the UN at its core, has been the foundation of ADN negotiations. The First Committee is the competent forum where the breadth and scope of these critical issues are assessed annually in a continuous effort to construct the security environment.

Greece is a strong proponent of the UN institutions and treaties which make up the ADN architecture, and an advocate of preserving and transforming this edifice on a robust step-by-step process based on the principles of International Law and International Humanitarian Law.

Mr. Chair,

When it comes to nuclear disarmament, we look forward to the deliberation of the 10th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) scheduled to take place in January 2022. The balanced approach of the Treaty’s three intertwined pillars, constitutes the foundation for nuclear disarmament, non proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy deliberations. In recent years the NPT pillars have been enriched with discussions taken up through initiatives such as the IPNVD (International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification), the Stockholm Initiative and the CEND (Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament). From our perspective, continuing support for the NPT translates into trust that we can in the future aim for a world without nuclear weapons with mechanisms ensuring unequivocal verification of this achievement.

The IAEA which is entrusted with key verification responsibilities, is called upon to play a pivotal role at a critical juncture not only for the NPT, based on Article III’s Safeguards, but also for the global non-proliferation architecture it supports, especially the JCPOA, which we hope will regain its momentum.
More generally, Greece assigns high importance to the stringent implementation of IAEA’s safety standards and nuclear security guidance documents. We cannot stress enough the importance of multinational confidence – building, supported through, inter alia, IAEA’s international assistance and peer review missions, such as the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Reviews (INIR) and the Site Evaluation for External Risks (SEED). Transparency and compliance with the results of such reports can only contribute towards bolstering regional and international confidence building measures. We strongly encourage states, which have selected nuclear power in their energy mix, to disclose their INIR & SEED reports in the spirit of transparency.

With regard to nuclear disarmament Greece remains committed to a step-by-step approach that will be effective, verifiable and irreversible. A Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), coupled with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would constitute the best way forward in this process.

Mr. Chair, dear Colleagues,

The upcoming Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) Review Conference in 2022 constitutes a litmus test for the future of international cooperation and the continuing relevance of international disarmament treaties. Although the norm against the use of biological weapons remains strong and preserved, strengthening the capacity of the BTWC, as well as its adaptation to the current developments in the field of life sciences, will enhance the Treaty’s long standing relevance and place it once again in the center of global WMD deliberations. We hope that the efforts applied will bear tangible results in the implementation of the BTWC going forward.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

In the conventional disarmament realm we continue to witness incremental steps, representative of a constructive and progressive dialogue. The 7th Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) under the presidency of Sierra Leone, was an opportunity to review the progress made since entry into force of the Treaty, and to set the guidelines in moving forward. With 110 state parties, and an additional 31 signatories, the ATT has made great strides towards universalization in the complex field of conventional arms transfers. The upcoming Review Conference of the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCWC), under the French Presidency, will assess the developments in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), and hopefully provide the impetus for a continuing engagement guided by the endorsed eleven guiding principles.

Despite the hurdles posed by the pandemic restrictions, and by a growing geopolitical instability, we must do our utmost to address the growing challenges in the Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control realm. Challenging times require innovative working methods, persistence and perseverance. We are confident that with your guidance the First Committee will rise to the challenge of a more secure global environment.

I thank you Mr. Chair.