Mr. Chairman,

Conventional Arms Control and Confidence-and Security-Building Measures are at the core of the regional security architecture and the concept of comprehensive and co-operative security. They remain the key instruments for ensuring military stability, transparency and predictability by reducing the risk of conflict or escalation of tensions.

The Treaty on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is one of the cornerstones of detente in Europe with a significant role in the history of the European security architecture. CFE Treaty was signed between countries, with the aim to replace military confrontation with a new pattern of security relations based on peaceful cooperation and thereby to contribute to overcoming the division in Europe. Another declared objective of the Treaty was establishment of a secure and stable balance of conventional armed forces in Europe and elimination capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action in Europe. These objectives, set almost 30 years ago continue to be relevant and timely.

The essence of both the CFE Treaty and Vienna Document is excluding conventional warfare as means of foreign policy through achieving military transparency and predictability. Arms control is not merely confined to arms limitations, export and import regulations. It is also about building trust and confidence through proper verification and transparency. These important tools were designed for all-weather implementation. Any other assumption would contradict their objectives.

Armenia is committed to the CFE Treaty and Vienna Document and is fully compliant with its commitments of arms limitations, on-site inspections and information exchange.

Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably, arms control regime and confidence and security building measures continue to deteriorate and the need to reverse this process has become an imperative. Lack of military transparency, military buildup in violation of treaty limitations, exclusion of armed forces from
verification create can undermine the security and stability and lead to use of force and grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Armenia has been consistently expressing its concerns regarding systematic violations of Conventional Arms Control regime by Azerbaijan. Destabilizing and unabated accumulation of armaments in violation of the CFE Treaty, significant exceeding of the Treaty ceilings, and exclusion of a large portion of armed forces from verification regime or preconditions put forward for receiving inspections undermines the security in our region.

As of January 1st 2020 according to the official information provided by Azerbaijan, it continued to exceed its ceilings in four out of five armament categories established by the CFE Treaty, namely in battle tanks (525, permitted ceiling is 220), armored combat vehicles (428, permitted ceiling is 220), artillery (972, permitted ceiling is 285) and attack helicopters (59, permitted ceiling is 50).

14 out of 28 brigades of Azerbaijani armed forces located at the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border for decades have been completely or partially excluded from inspection and verification, thus undermining the credibility of data provided by Azerbaijan under annual military information exchange.

All these violations of arms control regimes and CSBMs, including the uncontrolled accumulation of heavy weapons, largescale military exercises in violation of the provisions of the Vienna Document, accompanied by open threats to use force, military provocations and rejection of proposals on CSBMs in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were nothing more than preparations for a large-scale war. Absence of adequate reaction of the international community to the breaches of the core provisions of the CFE Treaty and Vienna Document by Azerbaijan served as an encouraging signal for the latter to resort to use of force.

The premeditated and well-prepared aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh on 27 September 2020 with involvement of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries confirmed the relevance of concerns of Armenia. From the first day of hostilities Azerbaijan widely used all types of heavy weaponry, including multiple launch rocket systems, artillery, missiles, various types of UAVs and military aircraft and prohibited weapons, such as cluster munitions and incendiary weapons to conduct targeted attacks on the civilian population and infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, as well as religious and cultural monuments in gross violation of the international humanitarian law. The fact of indiscriminate attacks of Azerbaijani armed forces by use of banned cluster munitions on the residential areas and critical civilian infrastructure, including in the capital Stepanakert was verified by the Human Rights Watch on the ground.

Mr. Chairman,

Strong and unequivocal response of the international community to the systemic and flagrant violations of legally binding international obligations and commitments, destabilizing military
buildup and use of prohibited weaponry to commit gross human rights violations and atrocity crimes is crucial to ensure accountability for the incompliance and resulting criminal actions. Military posturing, warmongering and use of force as means of conflict resolution and imposing unilateral solutions should be resolutely and unequivocally condemned.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Armenia’s commitment to contribute to strengthening of the conventional arms control and confidence building at global and regional levels.

Thank you.