



European Union

Opening Statement

Conference on Disarmament

Geneva, 21 January 2019

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

Let me begin by congratulating Ukraine on assuming the first Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019. You can count on the EU's support to achieve a successful start of this session.

We thank the UN Secretary-General, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the Secretary-General of the CD for their continued support and engagement on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The EU will continue to actively promote effective multilateralism and effective global governance, with the UN at its core.

We share the concern of the UN Secretary-General over the current international tensions and concur with his view that further dialogue, transparency and confidence-building measures are urgently required. Bearing in mind the severe and increasingly volatile security environment, we stress the need to preserve and further advance general arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes and call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation to enhance global security. It is important that all parties contribute to improving the strategic context for arms control and disarmament and avoid eroding the rules-based multilateral system, which is indispensable for maintaining international peace and security. The viability and effectiveness of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements require that those agreements be fully complied with, implemented and enforced.

We appreciate the UN Secretary-General's clear condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, his engagement to promote the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and his appeal to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in order to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. The EU will continue to address all proliferation crises in a resolute way. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems to State and non-State actors remains a grave threat to international peace and security, including European security. In addition, we must prepare for new threats, such as malicious cyber activities and destabilising activities in outer space.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we must do our utmost to uphold and strengthen its role as a key multilateral instrument reinforcing international peace, security and stability. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and an important element in the further development of the application of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. Its principles and goals continue to make a fundamental contribution to global security.

We recall that all States Parties have committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We reiterate the EU's strong support for all three pillars of the NPT and continue to call for the comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan.

In a holistic way, we continue to actively promote universalisation and prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT), advocate immediate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), support further work on nuclear disarmament verification in the UN Group of Governmental Experts and in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), and the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

Once again, we call to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and ensure its full and verifiable implementation. Russia must urgently address the serious concerns expressed about its compliance with the Treaty in a substantial and transparent way.

We recall that the two nuclear weapon States with the largest arsenals carry a special responsibility in the area of nuclear disarmament. The EU continues to attach great importance to the New START Treaty. We urge the continued implementation of the New START and the negotiation of a successor Treaty. We encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, and pursue further discussions on confidence building, transparency, verification activities and reporting. Given the severe security environment, we encourage all States concerned to take appropriate risk reduction measures, which are important to also ensure the safety and security of their nuclear arsenals.

Mr. President,

The EU reaffirms its commitment to verifiable treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament, and stresses the need to revitalise multilateral efforts and bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

The CD's continued relevance is of utmost importance for the EU. The CD should fulfil its crucial function to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties and it could also elaborate other instruments and norms, such as guidelines and codes of conduct. We deeply regret that it has not been possible to reach consensus on a negotiating mandate for more than 20 years. Strong political will is required if we are to break the impasse and ensure that we focus on substantive work this year in accordance with the CD's mandate. We should continue to explore also possible modernisation of its working methods for the benefit of a well-functioning CD.

The EU has a longstanding commitment to the enlargement of the CD. We underline the importance of furthering substantive consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support the appointment of a special coordinator in this respect.

We are grateful to the five coordinators from Indonesia, the Netherlands, Brazil, Germany and Belarus for their hard work and leadership in 2018 to bring forward substantive work, according to the agreed mandate of the subsidiary bodies, to reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities, deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement and consider effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations. The adoption of four

substantive reports for the first time in years is an important step forward and provides a solid basis to build on in 2019. We should not lose time in a protracted procedural debate, but build common ground on all core items, so that we would be better prepared to start negotiations when the overall context so allows. In this context, the EU supports your efforts to reach an agreement on a programme of work. Depending on the outcome of your consultations, the establishment of subsidiary bodies could allow further structured and technical discussions throughout the 2019 session in order to bring the CD back on track as soon as possible. We would support such an approach.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference reaffirmed the urgent necessity of negotiating and bringing to a conclusion a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Our longstanding priority is to immediately commence such negotiations in the CD, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. The EU calls on all CD members to agree to start such negotiations without delay. In the meantime, we call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the consensual outcome of the High Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group and look forward to discussing its findings in the CD. To ensure the inclusiveness of this process, the EU is providing financial support to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to facilitate the participation of African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries in FMCT related consultations and other activities.

With regard to negative security assurances, the 2010 NPT Review Conference stated that the Conference on Disarmament should immediately begin discussion with a view to elaborating recommendations on all aspects of the issue, without excluding an internationally legally binding instrument. The EU recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as part of binding and agreed security arrangements. The EU calls on all nuclear weapon States to reaffirm existing security assurances noted by UN Security Council Resolution 984 (1995) and recalled in UN Security Council Resolution 1887 (2009) and Resolution 2310 (2016). Negative security assurances can be an important confidence building measure which strengthen

the nuclear non-proliferation regime, contribute to nuclear disarmament and enhance regional and global security, in line with the goals and objectives of the NPT.

The EU and its Member States remain strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this context, we continue to stress the importance of transparency and confidence building measures enhancing the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. While we do not exclude the possibility of a new legally binding instrument in the future, we continue to believe that best near term prospects lie in agreeing on a voluntary instrument to establish standards of responsible behaviour across the full range of space activities. Globally shared principles of responsible behaviour should increase international cooperation in space, commit to mutual non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, facilitate an equitable access to outer space and increase transparency in the conduct of space activities.

The EU welcomes the Civil Society Forum held within the CD in August 2018 on science and technology matters. There were also interesting contributions by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and presentations such as the Clingendael Institute in the Subsidiary Body 2. We look forward to further opportunities to engage with NGOs, academia, industry and research institutions.

Mr. President,

It is a continuing concern that women remain heavily under-represented across multilateral fora that focus on security. The EU would like to emphasise the importance of the full and equal participation of women and men in all decision-making and action, including in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you, Mr. President