Statement by Turkey
OEWG – Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations
(Geneva, 15 May 2013)

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I would like to congratulate you on your assumption as Chair of the Open Ended Working Group. You can count on Turkey’s support and cooperation during the discharge of your duties.

Mr. Chairperson,

We must collectively strive to address common issues, common challenges and even common threats. Our ability to respond efficiently to the pressing challenges to international peace and security depends to a great extent on how we make best use of multilateral fora.

A world free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction remains our common aspiration. We are living in an era where one cannot argue that more arms would bring more security.

With this mindset, Turkey is resolutely committed to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Our security policies exclude the production and use of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Turkey is party to all international relevant instruments. We support their universalization, as well as effective implementation in good faith and consistency.

It is no secret that the multilateral disarmament machinery faces problems. Strengthening the disarmament regime is a collective responsibility of us all. With this understanding, we will be attending the Open Ended Working Group meetings with an open mind. We hope to have productive meetings with a view to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Mr. Chairperson,
At this general exchange part of the Open Ended Working Group, we would like to make a few remarks that will summarize our general approach on the issue.

The longstanding stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) unfortunately remains. Turkey wishes to see the immediate resumption of substantive work at the Conference. The CD is indeed a unique platform. It has a special responsibility in the contemporary disarmament agenda.

There is an urgent need to come up with a consensual Program of Work. Such a development will not only pave the way towards the commencement of negotiations on Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT), but also facilitate parallel advances on other agenda items.

The problems faced by the CD are not created by its procedures or internal dynamics. We need, more than ever, mutual understanding and creative thinking against the background of important developments at global level.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have recently concluded the NPT II Preparatory Committee meeting. We would like to reiterate that Turkey considers the NPT as the cornerstone of global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We are fully committed to the implementation of the Treaty in all its three mutually reinforcing pillars, namely disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Possible benchmarks for the sustainability of the NPT in the longer run include universalization of the Treaty and early entry into force of the CTBT.

Unfortunately, 2013 is already proving to be a difficult year in the area of disarmament. We are going through important regional and global challenges. On a global level, it is a truism that nuclear weapons exist in gruesome numbers and there is a looming risk of proliferation. The important test of striking a balance between disarmament and non-proliferation stands before us.

To be able to cope with the current challenges, Turkey believes that the existing mechanism needs to be strengthened and where necessary, effectively revitalized.

Turkey and its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) are working on issues like increased transparency of nuclear
armaments, reduced role of nuclear weapons and reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons.

We also remain concerned by the risk that nuclear weapons pose for humanity. Turkey believes that a robust awareness should be raised at the international level so that future generations do not have to fear for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Turkey welcomed the discussions at the Oslo Conference and look forward to actively participating to the follow-up.

Mr. Chairperson,

As for the other recent initiatives in disarmament issues, as underlined on other occasions we profoundly regret the postponement of the Conference on the establishment of Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We once again call upon all concerned to continue to work with the facilitator and conveners in order to hold this Conference at the earliest convenience this year.

To conclude, we would like to state that global peace and security can only be achieved through common vision and interdependence. Turkey is prepared to work together with other members of the OEWG and elsewhere towards the achievement of this vision.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.