Statement by Ambassador Mehdi Danesh-Yazdi
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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I seize this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this august body. I am confident that your diplomatic skill is an important asset for this committee to achieve positive outcomes this year. I also wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Abe, Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his efforts to advance the cause of disarmament within the United Nations system.

Mr. Chairman,

The imminent threat and danger of the development and proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) remain a real source of concern for the international community. This Committee bears a solemn responsibility to address these concerns and to continue its efforts to strengthen the global ban against Weapons of Mass Destruction, especially nuclear weapons. Universal adherence to the three main legal instruments banning the Weapons of Mass Destruction, namely NPT, CWC and BWC should also be pursued as a top priority within world’s disarmament agenda.

In this context, the failure to agree on a draft document on the substantive as well as procedural aspects of the 2005 NPT Review Conference is but disappointing. Indeed, it is a setback in our efforts to realize the objectives defined at the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The reluctance of certain Nuclear Weapon States to grant their full commitment to the agreed thirteen practical steps on nuclear disarmament continues to be the most difficult hurdle for the success of the 2005 review Conference. Furthermore, the new plans of one Nuclear Weapons State for production of usable mini nuclear weapons and allocation of millions of dollars for the research and development on these plans has put at stake the whole future of nuclear disarmament. Consequently,
the possible efforts of the other nuclear weapons states for maintaining the balance, by pursuing the same path, may trigger a new arms race era and adversely affect the forthcoming 2005 NPT Conference, particularly on the issue of Negative Security Assurances (NSA).

In the same area, after 30 years of the adoption of the General Assembly resolution, initially proposed by Iran, on the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East, no progress has been achieved for its realization because of the intransigent policy of Israel. In defiance of the numerous calls by the international community through the General Assembly resolutions and the NPT final documents, Israel’s rejection to respond to the concerns over its clandestine nuclear weapons program, is yet a major challenge before us.

Moreover, it is unfortunate that the inalienable right of the States parties to the NPT for peaceful uses of nuclear energy has been denied and hampered. Like all other members of the NPT, Iran considers the pursuit and development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to be its inalienable right, and has thus invested extensive human and material resources in this field. At the same time, as repeatedly stated, nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction have no place in Iran’s defense doctrine, not only because of our commitment to our contractual obligations under the NPT and other relevant conventions, but in fact, because of a sober strategic calculation.

My country, as an original State party to the NPT, is determined to realize its right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as enshrined in the Article IV of the Treaty. We are also committed to a full cooperation with the IAEA to ensure that our program is of peaceful nature and our power reactors and its relevant components are operated under the IAEA safeguards. In this framework, the Islamic Republic of Iran has opted, as an effective means to enhance confidence, to sign the additional protocol to its IAEA safeguards agreement and to implement it voluntarily even before its ratification by the parliament. We are determined to continue our cooperation with the IAEA until all remaining issues being finally resolved.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome and support the ongoing efforts by the international community with regard to the UN Program of Action to combat the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects. We also welcome the continuation of the negotiations under the chairmanship of Ambassador Thalmann in the Working Group on an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as an affected country by the menace of illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and especially its link to drug trafficking, continues to support the United Nations initiatives to combat and eradicate this menace. We look forward to the next meeting of the Working Group in January 2005 to pursue further negotiations on the above-mentioned instrument.
On the issue of missiles in all its aspects, the second panel of governmental experts, notwithstanding hard work by its members as well as the Chairman to forge consensus, was unable to finalize its report. Such a situation prompts us all to work more seriously and dedicatedly with better preparation to address this issue of high magnitude in the future. Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that our endeavor in this regard is at the initial stage of a longer process and will bring fruits if we approach the issue with a spirit of good faith and focused attention. To this end, it is imperative to redouble our efforts to advance the issue of missiles within the framework of the UN for the sake of a better and safer future.

Mr. Chairman,

Improving the efficiency of the UN disarmament machinery is of great importance. In this context, our efforts should be directed towards achieving the common objectives of disarmament and arms control. It is unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole negotiating multilateral disarmament forum, continues to be at stalemate. This seemingly never-ending deadlock over the program of work of the Conference has prevented this important UN body to function properly and continue to contribute to the legitimate aspiration of the international community on disarmament. We however welcome the recent initiatives, albeit limited in scope, to encourage the CD member states to embark upon substantive deliberations.

One of the disappointing events in 2004 was the failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) to finalize its agenda items for a three-year period. While the mandate of UNDC is well defined by the consensus General Assembly Decision 52/492, according to which the “Nuclear Disarmament” should continue to be one of its agenda items, certain Member States have attempted to provide a new interpretation of the GA Decision. However, the Non-Aligned states, while demonstrating utmost flexibility by their alternative proposals, believe that nuclear disarmament as the highest priority of international community should remain on the agenda of the UNDC. We are of the view that serious efforts must be made to save the UNDC from the repetition of scenario experienced in the CD.

The effective functioning of the First Committee has received fresh momentum following the adoption of the two important resolutions by the General Assembly on the revitalization of its methods of work. In this context, the improvement of the methods of work of the First Committee should be seen as an effective instrument to enhance its role in further contributing to peace and security. There are a number of areas that Member States can contribute to the improvement of the method of work of this Committee. These include:

- electing the chairman and other members of the Bureau at least three months before the meeting of the Committee in order to allow for focused consultations,
- holding more interactive debates based on a program and format elaborated through informal consultations between the Bureau and the Member States,

- submission of draft resolutions in a more concise, and action-oriented manner as well as to keep the preambular paragraphs to the minimum, where appropriate and practical,

- biennialization and triennialization of the agenda items;

- holding more informal consultations both before and during the Committee's deliberations for furthering the discussions on the draft resolutions already submitted or yet to be submitted to the Committee.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express our willingness and readiness to work with you and other delegations towards fulfilling the important mandate before us.

Thank you.