Mr. Chairman,

I would like to join previous speakers in extending my sincere gratitude to the distinguished panellists for their presentation on the activities of their respective disarmament bodies. Let me pay tribute to their leadership on the challenging task of revitalizing the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Turkey favours global, overall disarmament and supports all efforts in the field of sustaining international security through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Turkey believes that global challenges require global solutions. Needless to say, global problems cannot be solved unilaterally, bilaterally or in small circles of likeminded nations. Effective multilateralism is necessary and achievable.

A multilateral disarmament machinery is still up and running. The General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) are all part of this complex machinery.

Turkey considers that the CD has a leading role in addressing the security challenges confronting our nations. No one questions the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. In recent years, a considerable momentum has been created within the Conference. However, in spite of many attempts, it hasn’t been possible to overcome the decade-long stalemate in which the Conference continues to languish.

During the CD Presidency of Turkey a compromise package contained in document CD/1840 has been submitted on behalf of the 2008 Presidents of the Conference. We continue to hold the view that members of the CD may wish to take this opportunity by commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and bring up any issues that they may deem relevant during the negotiations. The CD may eventually take new initiatives in other areas, including, parallel advances on negative security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space.
Mr. Chairman,

Turkey, as one of the 2008 Presidents of the Conference, strongly believes that the so-called P-6 platform has proved to be an effective instrument for coherently and successfully steering the CD. We warmly welcome the incoming presidents' intention to continue this practice and wish them every success.

In his opening statement to the CD on 23 January 2008, the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon reminded us that "CD's successes are distant memories". Turkey sincerely hopes that the current stalemate will become a "distant memory" in the near future.

Turkey wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate her position regarding the question of the expansion of the CD membership. We believe that this does not constitute a priority at this stage. Furthermore, we consider that it should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, with due consideration to the contributions of candidates to international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The current disarmament machinery has been able to craft significant obligations and commitments in the field of disarmament. However, we believe that this machinery could do better.

Let me conclude with some memories from ancient history. The ancient city of Gordium is located in Central Anatolia, Turkey. You may recall that the problem of untying the Gordian knot resisted all attempted solutions until Alexander the Great cut it through with a sword. No member of the disarmament community needs to take a sword in his hand. The sword is in fact in our hands and it is called the political will.

Thank you.