Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Informal Group of Observer States to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), whose members are Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Oman, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

I am pleased to speak also on behalf of the following 32 States, including 21 Member States of the Conference on Disarmament: Angola, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Chile, Finland, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, Palau, Poland, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine.

The Group of Informal States has a cross regional composition as it is formed by 39 states representing all regions of the world. More than half of them have been waiting for over two decades to become full members of the CD, but have not been given any compelling reason for this long waiting. We would like to emphasize our strong commitment to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation goals through comprehensive, inclusive and effective engagement within the CD, as the sole negotiating body within the UN Disarmament machinery.

In our view, we should implement the idea enshrined in the final declaration of the First Session of the UNGA Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD) in 1979 that all nations in the world are responsible for the international peace and security and thus they all have the right to participate in the international disarmament negotiations.
We remain deeply concerned by the long-standing deadlock of the Conference and by its persistent inability to commence substantive work. All Observer States agree that there is an urgent need to reignite the work of the CD.

We regret the fact that since 1999, when the last enlargement of the Conference took place, no further action was taken on membership even though the Rules of Procedures stipulate that “The membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals” (Rule 2). 16 years can hardly be considered a regular interval. Observer States consider that the developments and challenges affecting the global security environment should be reflected in the appropriate and due inclusion of all interested States in the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe that the CD possesses the necessary tools to broker disarmament and arms control instruments that would have global and relevant impact, and thus requiring global participation. Therefore we would like to invite the Conference’s Member States once again to do their best to overcome obstacles that have prevented the CD from functioning in full operational capability.

Mr. Chairman,

In light of the above, we reiterate our call for the early nomination of a Special Rapporteur to review the issue of membership. We are all aware of the fact that the appointment of a Rapporteur does not automatically lead to any particular outcome and that the decisions are taken by the Member States of the CD in accordance to its Rules of Procedure.

UNGA resolution A/S-10/2, in its paragraphs 113th, 120th and 122nd refers to the evolution of the CD which in our view could constitute not only an area where the CD could show progress, but also, a larger membership may help overcoming the long lasting impasse. The enlargement, as such, is not a goal in itself but universalisation of the format and renewal of its global relevance indeed is.

Thank you Mr. Chairman!