EU Statement

By

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Mr. Chairman,

1. The European Union remains fully committed to effective multilateralism and the rules-based international system, with the United Nations at its core to face multiple security challenges. The agreement between E3/EU+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a clear illustration of this fact. It is a major achievement proving that diplomacy and perseverance can pay and could set an example for the resolution of disputes in the region and beyond.

2. In this respect, the role and contribution of the UN disarmament machinery, created by the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-I), the components of which are mutually reinforcing, remain crucial and irreplaceable. The General Assembly through its First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament must be utilised more effectively to fulfil their respective roles in the field of disarmament and reach results in line with their agreed mandates. We need to work together to move the UN disarmament machinery forward.

3. It is essential that we continue giving urgent attention to enhancing the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the UN General Assembly First Committee. Practical steps can be contemplated with a view to improving its practices and working methods and make it more effective. We believe that the Committee should serve as a forum for open and relevant exchange, able to deal with current challenges to our collective security and develop concrete measures to this end. It should concentrate its efforts on the most pertinent and topical issues.

4. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has the crucial role to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties according to its mandate. This year several efforts took place to break the deadlock and reach agreement on a Programme of Work, including a proposal submitted by the United Kingdom. However, yet again and despite many efforts the Conference did not succeed in agreeing on a Programme of Work and commencing negotiations. Efforts to reach agreement will continue to require sustained political will and creative thinking from all CD members. We wish to express our appreciation to the presidencies of Pakistan and Poland for the organisation of informal meetings, on women and disarmament and main international challenges for disarmament respectively.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
5. We reiterate our longstanding commitment to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. We underline the importance of continuing consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support the appointment of a special coordinator in this respect.

6. We welcome enhanced interaction between civil society and the CD and we hope that further steps can be taken towards broadened contribution of NGOs, academia and research institutions. We express our appreciation for the organisation of the second informal Civil Society Forum held under the authority of the Secretary General of the CD, Mr. Michael Moeller.

Mr. Chairman,

7. For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, remains a clear priority. We call on all CD member states to start negotiations on such a Treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on the agenda in line with the adopted Programme of Work CD/1864. We call on all states possessing nuclear weapons that have not done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The report of the FMCT Group of Governmental Experts can serve as a useful guidance in bringing the Conference on Disarmament closer to future negotiations. We welcome the draft resolution by Canada, Germany and the Netherlands. We lend our full support for the future discussions at the High-Level FMCT Preparatory Group as envisaged in this resolution.

8. The EU recognizes the important role that the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is designed to play as a deliberative body of the UN General Assembly on disarmament matters. Regrettably, it has not been able to fulfil its mandate and to deliver results for many years. We support the efforts to improve its working methods and enable more constructive and focused deliberations.

9. We continue to underline the importance of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) as a stand-alone, autonomous institution of the disarmament machinery. UNIDIR has supported the international community with independent and in-depth research on security issues and prospects for disarmament and non-proliferation. The EU and its Member States support its important work, including financially. We welcome the 2015 UNGA Resolution on the Thirty Fifth Anniversary of UNIDIR. The EU and its Member States are following closely its implementation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.