Statement by the Chinese Delegation at
the Thematic Discussion on Disarmament Machinery
at the First Committee of the 73rd Session of the UNGA

Mr. Chairman,

Over recent years, the international community has reflected on why multilateral disarmament machinery remains locked in stalemate and how to find a way out of this stalemate. Should we safeguard the existing machinery, or start up "new kitchens"?

Forty years ago, the First Special Session devoted to Disarmament of the UNGA(SSOD I) established multilateral disarmament machinery composed of the First Committee of the UNGA, the UNDC and the CD. In its early years, this disarmament machinery made important contributions to safeguarding world peace and security, and promoting international arms control and disarmament process. Against the current backdrop of severe and complicated international security situation, the authority of disarmament machinery should be strengthened rather than weakened. China believes that it needs joint efforts of all parties to revitalize multilateral disarmament machinery.

Firstly, we should defend the authority of multilateral disarmament machinery. The conclusion of Chemical Weapons Convention and Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty fully demonstrates the feasibility and effectiveness of disarmament machinery and its rules of procedure. We should not deny
the value and significance of disarmament machinery just because we have encountered some short-term difficulties and setbacks. The role of the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum is irreplaceable, and the role that other disarmament machinery including the First Committee of the UNGA and the UNDC has played is undeniable. Setting up “new kitchens” is absolutely not the correct path to solve problems.

Secondly, we should enhance the political will of the international community on disarmament. It is generally believed that the fundamental cause of the stalemate over disarmament machinery is the lack of political will. Political will, as the precondition for diplomatic efforts, is not established in a vacuum, but based on all parties’ assessment on the international security environment and the security environment of their own. Only by pursuing common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and abandoning the notion of absolute security, can we create a favorable international security environment that helps enhance the political will of all parties to take part in multilateral arms control and disarmament process.

Lastly, we should set up new agendas in accordance with international security situation. Multilateral disarmament machinery has to keep pace with the evolving situation of international arms control and disarmament process. Compared to dealing with old problems that have been dragging on for so many years, it is more urgent that we prevented the emergence of new problems. Preventative work is easier to start with and will create a window of opportunity for disarmament machinery to end its stalemate. The Chinese side has made suggestions to the CD on the review of new agenda items, including the development of new and emerging technologies, and lack of rules and norms for frontier issues. All parties could express their views on these issues fully and thoroughly, so as to inject vigor into multilateral disarmament machinery.

Mr. Chairman,
Since early this year, UN Secretary-General Guterres has delivered a speech at the CD and later launched the disarmament agenda, making recommendations to the revitalization of disarmament machinery. In-depth discussions on major issues in disarmament field have also been conducted in five subsidiary bodies set up by the CD this year. The Chinese side appreciates the positive efforts made by all parties, and hopes the CD could start substantial work based on the conclusion of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. The UNDC achieved results on the issues of conventional arms last year. The Chinese side hopes all parties could participate in the discussion of nuclear and outer space issues with an active and pragmatic attitude, so that the UNDC could achieve new progress. The Chinese side would like to make joint efforts with all parties and contribute to the maintenance and revitalization of existing disarmament machinery within the UN framework.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.