CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

Mr. Martin Klučar
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic
to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna

at the Thematic Discussion on Disarmament Machinery
of the First Committee of the 73nd Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic has always been a supporter of the United Nations and of effective multilateralism. In order to achieve goals and meet the challenges in the field of international security, especially in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, we need a well-functioning and fully operational UN disarmament machinery the role of which is in our view irreplaceable.

Unfortunately, one of the key components which play significant role in the whole machinery, Conference on Disarmament, has not been able to meet our expectations for more than two decades. We are frustrated by the continuing deadlock in this body and by its repeated failure to commence substantial disarmament negotiations.

Like the vast majority of UN Member States, we have been expecting the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally-binding Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We regret that it has not been able to deliver any tangible result to these ends so far. We understand that launching such negotiations is not feasible without consensus on adopting a Program of Work of the CD.

We also hope that sufficient time and effort will be devoted to the question of the enlargement of the Conference. This hope is in line with Rules of Procedures of the CD, which provide for the review of the membership question at regular intervals. We therefore reiterate our call for appointment of a special coordinator who could initiate the necessary debate on the topic of enlargement of the CD. We are convinced that the enlargement of the CD membership would promote transparency and inclusiveness of its work. We believe that the enlargement is not only essential to the CD but also to the international community as a whole. This step could help the CD to regain its credibility and dispel any doubts to the relevance of the CD.

Nevertheless, the Czech Republic is also encouraged by recent signs of progress in certain parts of the UN disarmament machinery. Specifically, we welcome the Disarmament Commission’s last year successful adoption of recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons (A/72/42) after 18 years of stalemate in the UNDC should be viewed as a clear encouraging sign. The Czech Republic hopes that the adoption of the UNDC recommendations will provide a much-needed momentum that will have a positive spillover effect throughout the entire UN disarmament machinery.
Finally, the Czech Republic remains a steadfast supporter of the crucial work of the 1st Committee of the UN General Assembly. With its universal membership and emphasis on decision-making by consensus, the 1st Committee of the General Assembly remains at the very center of our joint multilateral disarmament efforts. We are troubled by the recent efforts of some states to cast aside consensus as the principle mode of decision-making whilst giving preference to voting on procedural matters. We call on all states to uphold the principle of consensus and conduct negotiations in the spirit of mutual compromise and understanding.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.