Statement by Turkey
First Committee
Thematic Debate on Disarmament Machinery
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31 October 2018

Mr. Chairman,

Given the current challenges international security is facing, enhancing the effectiveness of the UN Disarmament Machinery needs to be our common priority. We would like to reiterate our support to the three complementary fora of the Disarmament Machinery, namely the First Committee, Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission.

The First Committee remains a significant component of the Machinery and a valuable forum to consider disarmament and non-proliferation issues. While valuing the practice of introducing resolutions, we believe that the international community needs to be mindful of the absolute value added of some of these resolutions and the need to avoid unnecessary duplications.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral platform for disarmament has been at the center of the efforts towards ensuring international security, since its inception. It has a unique place and a special responsibility in the international fora, as it is tasked with negotiating multilateral disarmament instruments.

Questions have been raised regarding the ability of the CD to perform its negotiating mandate. We need to bear in mind that the problems that hamper progress in the CD are not created by its procedures or internal dynamics. It does not operate in void and we need to refrain from assessing the CD’s work in abstraction from the rest of the disarmament efforts. Turkey is convinced that the CD possesses the mandate, rules of procedure and membership to discharge its duties.

In 2018, while consensus on the program of work has not emerged, encouraging and significant developments took place. Four subsidiary bodies were established on agenda items 1 to 4, and one subsidiary body was established on agenda items 5, 6 and 7. These subsidiary bodies were given responsibilities to reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities in the CD by taking into consideration all relevant views and proposals, past, present and future; to deepen technical discussions and broadening areas of agreement, including through the participation of relevant experts; and to consider effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations. We would like to once again thank the Coordinators of the subsidiary bodies for their hard work. The adoption of four substantive reports was a significant step forward.

The Conference will resume its work in 2019 and we believe that next year the most essential issue will be to maintain the relevance of the CD.

Turkey has the honour to be the last President of the Conference on Disarmament this year. In accordance with the importance we attach to the work of the CD, we have conducted the negotiations in a responsible and transparent manner, with a view to reach consensus on both the report of the CD and the resolution on the report. The annual draft resolution on the report
of the CD was submitted to the Committee and we count on the support of the Member States when it is considered in the following days.

Another important pillar of the Disarmament Machinery is the UN Disarmament Commission. We support the efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission and welcome the inclusion of outer space as an agenda item. We commend the efforts by the Chair of the UNDC, Amb. Gillian Bird of Australia, as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups. We hope that the deliberations will be instrumental in reaching consensus on the relevant recommendations, following the example of the breakthrough achieved in 2017.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate Turkey’s determination to continue to constructively contribute to the work of all the components of the Disarmament Machinery.

Thank you.