Mr. Chairman,

The credibility and effectiveness of multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regimes is closely linked to the compliance records of the states parties to these regimes. This fact has never been more clearly displayed than today, when some of these regimes face major crises of compliance. Verification of compliance provides confidence amongst parties to a regime that negotiated obligations are being fulfilled and, therefore, real security benefits will be realised. Absence of sound, well-established and broadly agreed compliance and verification measures, by contrast, makes analysing and resolving crises that much more difficult. While a presumption of good faith on the part of those entering into binding commitments remains at the core of international security cooperation, effective verification also remains a critical element of the security cooperation equation, as part of a robust and meaningful multilateralism.

The UN General Assembly has long been supportive of the role that verification can play in international security accord, especially in the realm of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. My delegation has routinely submitted to this Committee a biennial resolution, “Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the UN in the field of verification”, affirming the so-called “Sixteen Verification Principles” which were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its 43rd session in 1988. These principles remain valid, and I commend them to you again.

At the same time, and in the spirit of reviewing and rationalizing our working methods, Canada has decided not to introduce this resolution again in its current form, but rather use this thematic session to initiate an exchange of views on the challenges faced in realising long-standing verification goals under the current circumstances – and on how we might improve our collective capacity to verify, and promote compliance with, multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (or NACD) agreements.

In our view, a substantive discussion of the compliance and verification issue and the consideration of options for improving performance in this field would be a more valuable outcome of this year’s First Committee meeting than the adoption of a general expression of principles that has not changed in over a decade. On the basis of such a discussion, future action may suggest itself, including the possibility of ongoing informal exchanges over the coming year and submission of a modified resolution on the subject. We have thus submitted a draft decision, L. 49, to have this item inscribed on our agenda next year, with a view to using the coming year to reflect on this important issue; we hope it will be adopted by consensus.
As an initial contribution to such an exchange of views, my delegation has the following reflections and ideas to offer. They are informed by the Sixteen Verification Principles, but try to expand their focus, apply them to the current environment, and generate some practical suggestions.

1. **Make maximum use of existing machinery.** We have elaborate verification procedures in many NACD agreements and in the case of several of the most important, dedicated international organisations to carry out this work. We should strive to ensure that these organisations are provided with the means and assistance to fulfill their mandates. In addition, states parties should be encouraged to adopt the highest standards of demonstrating their compliance with undertakings and in facilitating the verification tasks of the concerned agencies, where such standards and arrangements have been promulgated. The Additional Protocol of the IAEA is a good example in this regard. Broadly, we should also be working to universalise adherence to verification and compliance measures as part of universalising the NACD regime as a whole.

2. **Seek ways to strengthen the NACD regime.** Some parts of our multilateral NACD treaty system, such as the NPT and the CWC, have strong verification mechanisms, while others such as the BTWC do not. A similarly wide variation exists in provisions for measures to judge and deal with cases of non-compliance. We should seek productive ways to cooperate in strengthening verification and compliance mechanisms within existing treaties, and to ensure that strong measures of this nature are included in newly-negotiated instruments as well.

3. **Ensure that verification means keep up with technological developments.** Despite all our best efforts, the arms race broadly continues, the evolution of weapons systems constantly challenging verification systems. Fortunately, in a balancing manner, our scientists and engineers continue to develop new means of verification, including both detection and data analysis. The International Monitoring System of the CTBT Organisation and studies by various groups on the application of satellite-based remote sensing are but two good examples. More could and should, however, be done to ensure that such ongoing advances in verification technology are actually applied as part of the multilateral resolution of compliance issues.

4. **Review the role of the Security Council.** In some of the major multilateral NACD treaties, such as the NPT, the Security Council holds the ultimate responsibility in cases of non-compliance. It would be helpful to consider the role the Security Council can play in a variety of scenarios involving both formal references under such treaties and other references under the rubric of threats to international peace and security. If we place the Council in this position, it is important that appropriate action be forthcoming, and more work needs to be done to examine the political space between treaty regimes and Security Council responsibilities. A few early questions arise. For example, should there be a set time frame for responding to referrals to the Council by treaty organisations? Is there a need for new ‘rules of the road’ to clarify situations where treaty-based verification and compliance efforts have been exhausted and Security Council roles and responsibilities are unclear? Would it be useful to enhance the practical ability of the Security Council to deploy its own fact-finding or investigative teams at short notice?

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5. The role of the Secretary General and Secretariat. Many NACD instruments, treaty-based and otherwise, lack verification procedures. At the same time, verification principle 8 speaks to the need to ensure that, where verification systems do exist, they are ‘reviewed and evaluated’ in light of experience. In these two respects, are there areas of monitoring or verification of international NACD accords that might be considered on the Secretariat? Should we be examining means of developing a capacity within the Secretariat to monitor and assist in the verification of commitments in these areas not covered by existing organisations? Could the Secretary General provide an impartial third-party verification service to states party to bilateral or plurilateral agreements without such integral provisions? Should, as some states have suggested, the specialised expertise and capabilities that have been built up by UNMOVIC be retained by the UN as an internal capacity, perhaps in the form of designated posts within DDA and/or a roster of previously identified experts on call to support verification or monitoring requirements?

I acknowledge having contributed as many questions as answers here, Mr Chairman, but we believe it would be most useful to garner the views of all member states on these issues so closely connected with the success of our disarmament and non-proliferation endeavours, before coming to conclusions. We look forward to hearing from others in this regard. Thank you.

N.B. For ease of reference, the Sixteen Verification Principles are listed on the reverse of this page.
The Sixteen Verification Principles

These Principles were prepared by a Working Group under Canadian chairmanship at the 1981 and 1988 sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and endorsed by United Nations General Assembly in Resolution A/RES/43/61 (B), December 7, 1988.

One. Adequate and effective verification is an essential element of all arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

Two. Verification is not an aim in itself, but an essential element in the process of achieving arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

Three. Verification should promote the implementation of arms limitation and disarmament measures, build confidence among States and ensure that agreements are being observed by all parties.

Four. Adequate and effective verification requires employment of different techniques, such as national technical means, international technical means and international procedures, including on-site inspections.

Five. Verification in the arms limitation and disarmament process will benefit from greater openness.

Six. Arms limitation and disarmament agreements should include explicit provisions whereby each party undertakes not to interfere with the agreed methods, procedures and techniques of verification, when those are operating in a manner consistent with the provisions of the agreement and generally recognized principles of international law.

Seven. Arms limitation and disarmament agreements should include explicit provisions whereby each party undertakes not to use deliberate concealment measures which impede verification of compliance with the agreement.

Eight. To assess the continuing adequacy and effectiveness of the verification system, an arms limitation and disarmament agreement should provide for procedures and mechanisms for review and evaluation. Where possible, time-frames for such reviews should be agreed in order to facilitate this assessment.

Nine. Verification arrangements should be addressed at the outset and at every stage of negotiations on specific arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

Ten. All States have equal rights to participate in the process of international verification of agreements to which they are parties.

Eleven. Adequate and effective verification arrangements must be capable of providing, in a timely fashion, clear and convincing evidence of compliance or non-compliance. Continued confirmation of compliance is an essential ingredient in building and maintaining confidence among the parties.

Twelve. Determinations about the adequacy, effectiveness and acceptability of specific methods and arrangements intended to verify compliance with the provisions of an arms limitation and disarmament agreement can only be made within the context of that agreement.

Thirteen. Verification of compliance with the obligations imposed by an arms limitation and disarmament agreement is an activity conducted by the parties to an arms limitation and disarmament agreement by an organization at the request and with the explicit consent of the parties, and is an expression of the sovereign right of States to enter into such arrangements.

Fourteen. Requests for inspections or information in accordance with the provisions of an arms limitation and disarmament agreement should be considered as a normal component of the verification process. Such requests should be used only for the purposes of the determination of compliance, care being taken to avoid abuse.

Fifteen. Verification arrangements should be implemented without discrimination, and, in accomplishing their purpose, avoid unduly interfering with the internal affairs of States parties or other States, or jeopardizing their economic, technological and social development.

Sixteen. To be adequate and effective, a verification régime for an agreement must cover all relevant weapons, facilities, locations, installations and activities.

Note: the sixteen principles were expanded upon in a subsequent UN publication entitled Verification in All Its Aspects, Including the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification (A/58/377, 22 September 1995).