Statement by H.E. Amb. Hu Xiaodí
Head of Chinese Delegation
at the Thematic Debate
of the First Committee of the 60th Session of
the United Nations General Assembly
on
Disarmament Machinery

(New York, 18 October 2005)
Mr. Chairman,

In recent years, the multilateral arms control and disarmament process continues to find itself in stalemate. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva has failed to conduct substantive work in almost a decade. The UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is yet to agree on its agenda for two years. The Review Conference of the Non-proliferation Treaty this year has ended without substantive result. No consensus had been reached on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation language in the outcome document of the UN Summit.

Many countries are thinking about the reasons for the above-mentioned negative development. Many of them have asked, what is wrong with the traditional multilateral arms control and disarmament process? During the First Committee meetings last year, we had lively discussion on improving the working method of the Committee. Over the past year, in view of the characteristics of the traditional arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms, countries came up with some brave ideas of reform. They believe that these measures can be conducive to the launching of negotiations or substantive work on certain important areas. My delegation would like to share our view in these issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The First Special Session on Disarmament of the UNGA (SSOD I) in 1978 established multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery within the UN framework, which included the First Committee of the UNGA, the UNDC and the CD. For decades, important treaties and conventions such as NPT, CWC, BTWC and CCW have constituted the international legal framework of multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral organs closely related to these treaties, such as IAEA, as well as review mechanisms on the implementation of related treaties, such as the NPT Review Conferences, have played important roles in the smooth implementation of those international legal instruments. What needs to be emphasized is that due to the authority and broad representation of these traditional mechanisms, the related multilateral efforts conducted through these mechanisms have never failed to receive the
most extensive support from and participation by the international community. This is something that cannot be replaced by any other international mechanism.

Today, some countries have advocated that, in face of the new international security situation, the international community and the relevant international mechanisms need to keep pace with the times, handle new issues and respond to new challenges. Many other countries have stressed the point that since the agenda and objectives set forth by SSOD I are yet to be fulfilled, they are not out of date and require continued efforts. We believe that both arguments are credible. They have reflected different angles of realities. They should therefore become complementary rather than repelling one another. Likewise, it is necessary to attain coherence in a wide spectrum of efforts for international arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and settlement of humanitarian concerns. While advancing the traditional disarmament goals, it is important to seek new opportunities and respond to new challenges, thus comprehensively consolidating, strengthening and improving the current international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation systems. This is pivotal for maintaining world peace, security and stability.

To promote a fair, rational, comprehensive and sound development of the international cause of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, the international community should follow the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and other universally recognized norms governing international relations, foster a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination, enhance mutual trust through dialogue and promote common security through cooperation. The right of all countries to equal participation in international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation affairs should be guaranteed and the international process of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation promoted on the basis of no derogation of the security of all countries.

Secondly, it is of vital importance to give full play to the role of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. It is essential to respect the authority of the traditional multilateral mechanisms of arms control,
disarmament and non-proliferation, and make full use of the existing traditional mechanisms. It is on this premise that parties should and must discuss how to improve the efficiency of the relevant mechanisms.

Thirdly, it needs to be emphasized that political will is the precondition for diplomatic efforts. There is no exception for multilateral diplomacy. Universal participation is the key to ensure successful multilateral efforts. Multilateral process should be inclusive and not exclusive. Only by including all the stakeholders, will it be possible for parties to reach multilateral arrangements that are genuinely universal and effective. It is therefore necessary to continue to adhere the principle of consensus in all substantive negotiations on international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. This will guarantee the fairness, equality, rationality and universality of the international arrangements.

Fourthly, major reforms on traditional multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation systems need to be realized through convocation of new SSOD. Only SSOD and its preparation process can provide UN Member States with the opportunities to fully and substantively air their views on all the related issues on reforms, and reach new consensus on adjustment to multilateral mechanisms. And it does not matter if consensus cannot be reached quickly among all the parties. The international discussion by itself is a process to create conditions for consensus. What is important is for all parties to attach great importance to and fully use this process and make tireless efforts towards the above goals.

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese Delegation will continue to follow and take an active part in the related multilateral discussions, and make unswerving efforts to safeguard the traditional multilateral mechanisms within the UN system, accelerate international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process, and maintain world peace, security and stability.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.