Madam Chairperson,

Let me begin by congratulating you to your election as chairperson of the First Committee and by expressing my delegation’s utmost satisfaction with the manner you chair its discussions.

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Each year the topic of disarmament machinery ranks among the most important ones. I dare to say that this evaluation is this year valid more than ever before. We have witnessed too many setbacks in different disarmament bodies. Unfortunately, none of the segments dealing with disarmament issues is immune to the malaise, which afflicts the multilateral disarmament efforts. I am afraid I have to agree with those speakers who indicated that unless all member states renew their confidence in multilateral disarmament bodies we should be prepared for more result-less disarmament meetings.

This being said in the wide context of this issue, let me now focus on the developments and lessons learned of this year’s CD activities.

Since the very beginning of the work of the First Committee we have listened carefully to the views and opinions expressed in relation to the activities of the CD. We noticed that several speakers have been rather critical when referring to the CD by using expressions like stagnation, impasse, stalemate, etc. With all due respect I take the liberty of not sharing these opinions for a number of reasons. First of all it is my belief that these evaluations reflect the traditional or stereotype assessment of the CD in the years preceding 2006.

I would be ready to agree with these critical assessments only if those referring to this year as yet another year of stagnation had been speaking about double-stagnation in relation to the previous years. All of us know that during those years the conference had not been engaged neither in future-oriented substantive discussions nor negotiations.

Therefore stagnation in 2006 can be interpreted in such sense that we have not been able to commence real negotiating process. Still, we should realize that nobody has a magical formula to achieve this goal. It is a long and painstaking process which as I indicated earlier should be accompanied by positive developments in other disarmament bodies. Despite this I believe that the CD has made an effort to get on the right track in this respect. The important fact is that in 2006 a number of significant prerequisites have been put in place and that they have a strong potential to serve as a basis for further developing the process leading to fulfillment of the main mandate of the conference that is to negotiate disarmament instruments.

This year we have witnessed by far more activities of the CD than ever before in the last decade. The schedule of activities proposed by the P6 allowed for conducting unprecedented structured debates. Moreover, they were supported by valuable participation of experts from capitals. This arrangement enabled delegations to focus on their priorities without blocking discussions on the topics which were emphasized by other Member States. This approach created an atmosphere of mutual respect for concerns of others, atmosphere of willingness to listen to the concerns of others and thus generated the spirit of higher level of understanding among the delegations. This attitude, if accompanied by the ingredient of sufficient political will, may give the conference an opportunity to start negotiations within a foreseeable future.

This year’s experience of cooperation and coordination of the activities of all CD Presidents has brought about one significant message to the whole membership of the conference. It has proved that countries belonging to different regional groups with various disarmament approaches and interests can
find a common language and can act even in a concerted way. This expression of flexibility and compromise-oriented approach serves, in my opinion, as an example for the entire membership that things can move forward if there is enough political will for conducting dialogue in good spirit.

Madam Chair,

I am convinced that I have provided sufficient number of facts which certify that this year has been different both in the spirit and quantity as well as quality of debates in the CD. However, it is regrettable that we have not been able to preserve the positive changes until the very end of the session. At the final stage when we failed to reflect them faithfully in the 2006 annual report.

There are various reasons why we ended up without a report which would provide far more substantive picture of what has been deliberated by the CD this year. The most important one, as seen from my point of view, has been the re-appearance of old approaches. Here I have in mind the strong preferences for selective reflections of certain issues in the report, the intentional and sometimes even jealous contesting of the relevance of some topics to the work of the conference. Last but not least the political situation in the world in wider context contributed to this setback.

In order to conclude my remarks in a more positive mode, let me stress that the six Presidents of this year continue to have a mutual sense of responsibility towards the future developments in the Conference on Disarmament. This has led them to elaborating a document called “the P6 vision”. While it is not aimed at imposing any prescriptions or suggestions to the incoming President of the conference and other Presidents of 2007, it provides for some ideas that may be considered by them as an inspiration. At the same time this paper could serve as a potential source of ideas to be consulted with Presidents of this year so that their experience is made full use of. Let me stop here and give an opportunity to elaborate on this issue by the godfather of the P6 initiative, my dear colleague Ambassador Rapacki of Poland.