Statement of

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before

First Committee: Thematic Debate

“Disarmament Machinery”

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Mr. Chairman

In the context of our thematic debate on Disarmament Machinery, let me begin by reiterating Egypt’s full support to the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, which have proved to be a worthy set of international tools in the field of disarmament as had been foreseen by the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD1).

From the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the international community obtained a number of key legal instruments which have framed our legal commitments and national as well as international practices in their domains, and from the Disarmament Commission, some key guidelines and norm setting consensus frameworks have evolved, including the 1999 Guidelines on the Establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, adopted by consensus under my personal Chairmanship that year.

Egypt supports the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as the sole specialized, deliberative body within the UN multilateral disarmament machinery, and believes in the important work of the Committee and the important results it can produce. We note its work at its ongoing three-year cycle on the “recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”, “elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade” and on “practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons” and actively contribute to work conducted on all three main themes.

As efforts intensify today to revitalize the disarmament machinery in general, and the Conference on Disarmament in particular, I wish to refer to our rich interaction at the High-Level Meeting on “Revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations”, held on 24 September, and recall the range of views and proposals, including those of the Secretary-General, put forward at that important deliberative opportunity. In this context, we thank the Secretary-General for his five-point proposal presented on 24 September 2009 and for his proposals presented at the High Level Meeting, which we consider to be complementary to the range of proposals put forward by member States rather than being an alternative to such proposals.
Indeed, we have supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to add a new agenda item entitled “High-Level Meeting on “Revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations”, but we do not support that such an item be used as a platform to criticize the CD or to take disarmament negotiations out of its context. We value more that an effort be exerted to understand the underlying reasons for which a consensus has been difficult to obtain in the CD and address hurdles to such consensus. We believe such an effort would be best exerted in the CD itself, supported as necessary by the General Assembly.

In this context, Egypt believes that the CD is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and in this context welcomes the collective action of the member States that aims to revitalize the work of the conference as long as such efforts neither target its rules of procedures nor its priorities. This was our position at the adoption of the program of work for the Conference in 2009 as reflected in CD document (CD/1864) and our approach towards the High-level Meeting in September. It has not changed.

While fully agreeing that the revitalization of the Conference represents an important dimension of efforts to revitalize the Disarmament Machinery, we do not support focusing only on the CD as a priority on the account of needed equal efforts to revitalize the UNDC and further streamline the work of the First Committee.

We believe that efforts to revitalize the CD should not be only driven by the desire to begin negotiations on the FMCT but rather with a view on the overall potential this crucial body represents in terms of negotiations on a legally binding instrument on unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapons States, and more importantly on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, and other identified priorities among its four core issues.

Mr. Chairman

Recalling that today’s Disarmament Machinery are primarily the creation of the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD1), it is difficult to see how revitalizing such important fora can take place without successfully convening the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) which represents the most competent body to evaluate the mandates and procedural frameworks of the machinery, including in particular the CD and the UNDC.
Along with all States members of NAM, Egypt cosponsors a draft resolution presented by Indonesia on behalf of the Movement, which calls for the establishment an open-ended working group to establish the Preparatory Committee for SSOD-IV starting from next year. Despite the failure by SSOD-II and SSOD-III to achieve their objectives, they both showed us where some of the shortcomings are. SSOD-VI will take note of that and will certainly build on the momentum created by the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference along with other positive developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Guided by a genuine determination to play an active role in collective efforts for revitalizing the disarmament machinery, Egypt will play its role in demonstrating the flexibility and assertiveness required to move the multilateral disarmament agenda forward. We call on all other States to do so as well and look forward to our collective success in this important endeavor.

Thank you Mr. Chairman