CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

H.E. Ms. Kateřina SEQUENSOVÁ

Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva and to the World Trade Organization

on behalf of the Informal Group of Observer States to the Conference on Disarmament

at the Thematic Debate on Disarmament Machinery of the First Committee of 67th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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Mr President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Informal Group of Observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. The Group of Informal States has a cross regional composition as it is formed by 39 states representing all regions of the world. More than half of them have been waiting for more than two decades to become full members of the Conference on Disarmament. At this important moment we would like to emphasize our strong commitment to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

Therefore, we are deeply concerned by long deadlock of the Conference and by its permanent inability to commence substantive work in matters of its agenda. All Observer States agree that there is an urgent need to revitalize the CD. Thus, we welcome this opportunity to share our views on this process, to which expansion of the CD indisputably belongs.

We regret the fact that since 1999, when the last enlargement took place, no further action was taken on membership even though the Rules of Procedures stipulate that "The membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals" (Rule 2). Observer States consider that the developments in the global security environment should be reflected in the appropriate representation of States in the Conference on Disarmament. We call on all its members to stop CD from becoming a relic of the past.

In our view, the Conference should seriously and urgently consider inviting more countries to join in, reflecting the world we live in. Furthermore, we ought to keep in mind that while CD’s membership is rather limited, its decisions have a global impact in nature and are binding for all UN Member States.

Mr. President,

In light of the above, we reiterate our call for the early nomination of a Special Rapporteur to review the issue of membership. We are all aware of the fact that
the appointment of a Rapporteur does not automatically lead to any particular outcome and that the decisions are taken by the member States of the CD. Observer States are convinced that enlargement is an asset which could help to re-legitimise this unique multilateral negotiation forum in these difficult times, thus also increasing the CD's chances of success. Ultimately, enlargement is not a goal in itself, it is rather another tool at the disposal of its member states, which can contribute to the revival of a very important multilateral forum.

Thank you, Mr. President.