Mr. Chair,

We regret that the two main forums established to advance multilateral disarmament failed, again, to fulfill their mandates this year. The UN Disarmament Commission again concluded without consensus recommendations and, despite successive efforts, the Conference on Disarmament was unable to agree to a programme of work. While the creation of the CD informal working group offers the possibility of a way forward, it remains to be seen if the group can overcome the current impasse. Ultimately, we remain at almost the same point where we have been for the past decade: as states bicker, key priorities remain unmet.

Mr. Chair,

Some argue that it is a lack of political will that is holding up the Conference on Disarmament. This is only partly true. A close inspection of the record of the CD this year shows strong political will, flexibility, and compromise from many member states, across regional groups, to find a way forward based on innovative solutions. Almost all states were prepared to take difficult decisions to reach consensus and return the CD to substantive work. However, the reality remains that, as long as even one state remains unwilling to give serious consideration to the best interests and expectations of the international community, alongside their own national interests, the CD will remain deadlocked. As a result, there will be no progress on negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Canada welcomed the creation of the CD Informal Working Group. We continue to hope, albeit tempered by our past experience, that the Informal Working Group might create a spirit of cooperation, flexibility, and compromise that leads to a programme of work.

Canada also participated in the Open-ended working group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Discussions were open, constructive, and substantive. The OEWG demonstrated that, regardless of differences in approach, the vast majority of states genuinely want to attempt to find a way forward.

Finally, we look forward to the upcoming Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, an opportunity for experts to substantively advance the issue over eight weeks in the next two years.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.