STATEMENT by

TURKEY

at the

Thematic Debate on

DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

68th SESSION OF THE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST COMMITTEE

24 October 2013, New York
Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure for me to share our views on the disarmament machinery today in this august gathering.

Turkey shares the concern of many others in this chamber vis-á-vis the continuous stalemate that lingers over the UN Disarmament Machinery. The Conference on Disarmament, once a success story and a source of pride for all of us, has been remaining dormant for too long now. The same unfortunately applies to the UN Disarmament Commission.

Against this backdrop, Turkey believes that the approach of multilateralism and progressive interactions among states carry sufficient ways and means towards rectifying the ailing components of the machinery.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the UN disarmament machinery as well as the relevant institutions and mechanisms should be a shared objective. Therefore there is inevitably a necessity for a collective response. What we lack currently is political will by some states without which stalemate seems endless and progress seems far.

Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that this very mechanism has, in the past, been successful in producing tangible outcomes, namely negotiating and bringing about Conventions which are still in force. Therefore, it is not time to despair. It is time to rekindle collective efforts to revitalize the whole mechanism.

As for the CD, Mr. Chairman, Turkey believes that the problems that hamper progress are not created by its procedures or its internal dynamics.

We have to acknowledge that there is a certain malaise throughout the disarmament fora and machinery, both at international and regional levels. Stalemate in the CD is the reflection of the strategic bottlenecks at different yet interrelated levels. As a somewhat related example, if the international community fails in its initiative to successfully convene the Conference on the WMD Free Zone in the Middle East, this will have negative repercussions on all disarmament fora. Therefore, we need to see the big picture and not to assess the work of the CD in abstraction from the rest of the disarmament efforts.

Certainly, the resumption of the substantive work of the CD with the consent of all its members, will contribute to the improvement of international efforts for nuclear disarmament. To this end, we see the need to urgently come up with a consensual Program of Work. Such a development will pave the way towards the commencement of negotiations. It is our conviction that only then the CD will be revitalized. We should not spare any effort, within the CD, that would generate more mutual understanding and confidence, while not ignoring the developments outside the CD.

Turkey believes that the Conference possesses the mandate, rules of procedure, and membership to discharge its duties. At this stage where we need progress and where we need it fast, it is Turkey's sincere wish that we do not dilute our focus on the main substantive issue by introducing into our deliberations additional points of contention that do not command consensus.

Unfortunately, another important pillar of the UN Disarmament Machinery that has not functioned as we would have desired, is the UN Disarmament Commission. Despite the fact that it is a deliberative body, with the function of considering and making recommendations, it has not been able to reach agreement for over a decade. Furthermore, participation and interest of states has
steadily diminished over the years. We welcome the substantive debate that took place during the last session in 2013. We hope that the current three year cycle, ending next session, will demonstrate that the UNDC is a relevant body that can fulfill its mandate, as it had done for decades in the past.

The First Committee, on the other hand, remains as a significant component of the disarmament machinery. Turkey values the institution of introducing resolutions. Nevertheless, we believe the international community needs to be mindful for not creating a self-imposed maze of duplication through the resolutions we draft. To this end, Turkey believes that if needed, we should be in a position to consider some flexibility so as to be able to make the necessary consensual amendments to the contents of the resolutions as well as the timetable of introducing them.

Mr. Chairman,

By way of conclusion, let me reiterate our call for solidarity and cooperation. There may be challenges ahead but despairing is not the way to overcome them. Striving to bring about change through mutual understanding and progress is.

Thank you.