Mr President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland†, Serbia, Albania*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia

Let us first congratulate you on the assumption of the post as the first President of the Conference on Disarmament during its 2014 session. It is a challenging time for the Conference and we would like to assure you that we will fully support you in your efforts to achieve a successful start of this session. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Presidents, Ambassadors Corr and O'Brien of Ireland, for their untiring efforts in leading the Conference on Disarmament to the adoption of last session's Report to the United Nations General Assembly.

We take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for addressing the Conference on Disarmament today and for his commitment and interest in the work of the Conference. We have heard again his urgent appeal to this Conference to commence substantive work and start long-overdue negotiations. We fully support and endorse this appeal and will work to see effective follow-up to it.

Let us also extend our warmest welcome to the newly appointed acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference, Mr Michael Moller and assure him of our full support in his endeavours.

Mr President,

We are pleased that this new year has started with a positive development. On 10 January 2014, the E3/EU+3 and Iran reached a common understanding on the implementation modalities of initial measures as set out in the Geneva Joint Plan of Action of 24 November 2013 on the nuclear programme of Iran. Thanks to this agreement, the foundations for a coherent, robust and smooth implementation of the Joint Plan of Action over the six-month period have been laid. The E3/EU+3 and Iran started the implementation of the first step yesterday, 20 January, 2014. The Council of the EU suspended certain EU restrictive measures against Iran for a period of six months.

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* The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
† Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
Mr President,

One of the guiding principles of the EU in the field of disarmament is effective multilateralism. We would also like to reiterate EU Member States' longstanding commitment to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. We underline the importance of continuing consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support the appointment of a special co-ordinator on the expansion of the CD membership.

We are deeply troubled by the continued dysfunction of a crucial part of the disarmament machinery caused by the on-going stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. In its resolution 68/64, the UN General Assembly once again called upon this Conference to intensify further consultations and explore possibilities for overcoming its ongoing deadlock by adopting and implementing a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work at the earliest possible date during its 2014 session.

Mr President,

The Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with its mandate, has the crucial role to negotiate multilateral treaties. It is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. Its inability to fulfil this role leaves a considerable vacuum in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Adopting and implementing a Programme of Work is extremely urgent, as we are running out of time. The informal working group established under CD/1956/Rev. 1 last year demonstrated the willingness of member States to explore ways to reach a consensus on a programme of work and to unblock the CD at last.

For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, remains a clear priority. Such a treaty constitutes an urgent necessity in the nuclear disarmament field as a complement to the NPT and the CTBT. National security concerns, while legitimate, can and should be addressed as part of the negotiation process rather than as a prerequisite.

We call on all CD member states to start negotiations on such a Treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on the agenda in a manner consistent with CD/1864, the most recent Programme of Work adopted by the CD. We believe that confidence-building measures can be taken immediately, without the need to wait for the commencement of formal negotiations. We therefore call on all states possessing nuclear weapons to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We are looking forward to the meetings of the group of governmental experts established by resolution 67/53 of the General Assembly this year and in 2015.

We remain ready to engage in substantive discussions on the other items included in CD/1864: on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination, including on approaches toward potential future work of a multilateral character; on all issues related to the prevention of arms race in outer
space and on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states against
the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as on other issues on the CD agenda.
Consistent with our engagement with civil society, we are looking forward to enhanced
interaction between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, thus strengthening the
contribution of NGOs and research institutions to the work of the Conference.

Mr President,

It is clear that the adoption of a Programme of Work will require sustained political efforts
from all of us. It is in the hands of all members to restore the CD to the central role it can play
in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and multilateral disarmament. This year should
be used effectively to put the CD back on track. We cannot afford another fruitless year.

We will spare no efforts to work with you Mr President, to achieve this goal and urge all
Member States of the Conference to engage constructively to this end.

Thank you.