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Statement by H.E. Ambassador HU Xiaodi
Head of the Chinese Delegation
at the 2008 Substantive Session of
the United Nations Disarmament Commission
(General Exchange of Views)

(New York, 7 April 2008)

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this session of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I am convinced that, with your rich experience and diplomatic skill, you will lead this session to progress. My delegation assures you and other delegations of its full cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

In recent years, the overall process of international arms control and disarmament has been at low ebb. There is still a long way to go towards complete nuclear disarmament. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is facing severe challenges. Military and security factors are getting more prominent in international relations. Against such backdrop, our deliberations on "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" bear realistic significance.

This is the last session of the current cycle of deliberations of the UNDC. Over the past two years, we have had in-depth exchanges of views on both agenda items. In spite of divergent views on some issues, our work has achieved certain progress. China appreciates the efforts of the chairpersons of the two working groups in pursuit of consensus and is ready for further improving the relevant draft texts.

Mr. Chairman,

During the last two sessions of the UNDC, the Chinese delegation elaborated its positions, proposals and policies on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the following points:

Firstly, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are closely related to international security. A sound international security environment will provide impetus and guarantee to the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation process. The nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation effort will in its turn contribute to the establishment of a solid foundation for the international security. The international community should abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and other universally recognized norms of international law in promoting the building of a harmonious world featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation and in establishing an international environment of peace, stability and common security, so as to eliminate the motivation for reserving or seeking nuclear weapons and create necessary conditions for the realization of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Secondly, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are complimentary to each other and mutually reinforcing. All the States Parties should fully implement the NPT in an earnest way and strive to promote substantive progress in the current review process of the NPT. The relation among nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy should be appropriately addressed and nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be pushed forward in a balanced way. The legitimate rights of all countries to peaceful use of nuclear energy should be fully guaranteed and respected while the goal of non-proliferation be realized.

Thirdly, the complete and thorough disarmament of nuclear weapons cannot be accomplished over night. It should be achieved through systematic, gradual and specific measures on the basis of safeguarding strategic balance and stability of the world. In this regard, the two States with the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and primary responsibilities for nuclear disarmament. They should take the lead to reduce their nuclear arsenals significantly in a verifiable and irreversible manner. The nuclear-weapon States should renounce the doctrine of first use of nuclear weapons, unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones and conclude relevant international legal instruments. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva should reach consensus on its programme of work at an early date, so as to carry out substantive work on nuclear disarmament, security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, fissile material cut-off and prevention of an arms

race in outer space. The international community should continue promoting the early entry-into-force of the CTBT.

Fourthly, the proliferation of nuclear weapons has its complex causes. Therefore, it is necessary to address both the root causes and symptoms in a comprehensive manner. We should advance nuclear non-proliferation under the guidance of multilateralism and ensure impartiality and nondiscrimination. Embargo and pressure can hardly offer a fundamental solution to the proliferation concerns. The relevant countries should, on the basis of consultation on an equal footing and mutual respect, commit themselves to enhancing dialogues, building confidence and normalizing their relations, maintaining and promoting peace and stability, so as to create the prerequisite for the realization of nuclear non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

As a nuclear weapon State, China is loyal to its responsibilities and obligations of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as stipulated by the NPT. It has always exercised the utmost restraint on the scale and development of its nuclear weapons. China did not and will not take part in nuclear arms race. It has all along pursued the policy of unconditional no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and no-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China is strictly implementing its international obligations related to nuclear non-proliferation and actively participates in the relevant international efforts.

Working hard to promote the peaceful resolution of regional nuclear issues, we always advocate for the peaceful settlement of the Korean Peninsular nuclear issue. As part of the joint efforts of relevant parties, China has contributed to the convening of the 6-party talks with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Peninsular. Continuing our unremitting efforts to actively mediate among relevant parties, we will do our best to help overcome the current difficulties, maintain the momentum of the 6-party talks and facilitate the denuclearization process, so as to ensure the peace, security and stability of the Korean Peninsular.

China is also dedicated itself to the peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic efforts and negotiations. It stands for the strict implementation of the international non-proliferation obligations and the respect for the legitimate rights of relevant countries to peaceful use of nuclear energy. Diplomatic negotiation is the best way to solve the Iranian nuclear issue and serves the common interests of the international community. Currently, all parties should intensify diplomatic efforts in reaching agreement on possible

ways to resume negotiations at an early date, with a view to seeking a long-term, comprehensive and appropriate solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.

Mr. Chairman,

China supports confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the field of conventional weapons. Deliberations on this agenda item at UNDC in recent years reflect certain common ground among relevant parties as well as the complexity and sensitivity of the issue.

Conventional arms relate to important security concerns of various countries. CBMs on a voluntary basis and in conformity with the security interests of relevant countries will be truly conducive to confidence-building among countries. In promoting CBMs, we need to take into consideration the degree of comfort of relevant parties, and avoid elements that may arouse serious divergence. We need to develop CBMs in light of the concrete situation of different regions and time, with an objective and pragmatic attitude, and in a step-by-step and incremental manner.

China has unswervingly followed the road of peaceful development and pursued a defensive-in-nature national defense policy. Over the past years, China has actively promoted and participated in regional disarmament and CBMs. Within such frameworks as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), China has been working with relevant countries to vigorously explore and practice CBMs aimed at enhancing mutual trust and promoting regional security. Last year, China started to report annually to the United Nations its military expenditures, and resumed participating in the UN Register of Conventional Arms. These represent renewed efforts by China in CBMs in the field of conventional weapons. Our policies and actions demonstrate that China is firm in safeguarding international and regional peace and stability and China's development will not constitute any threat to any other country.

Mr. Chairman, proceeding from the above-mentioned principles and positions, China is ready to make concerted efforts with all parties to promote progress on the two agenda items of this session of the UNDC.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.