Mr. President,

At the outset, let me affirm that Indonesia shares with you the importance of bringing the issue of revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, including the involvement of civil society, into our discussion today. My delegation also associates itself with the statement by the Ambassador of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Group of 21.

The issue of revitalization of the Conference has become the attention of many of us.

On 24 September 2010, the UN Secretary General convened the High-Level Meeting on ‘Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations’. A follow-up meeting on that High-Level Meeting was then convened on 27 July 2011 by the UN General Assembly.

On 14 February 2012, CD Secretary General delivered the message of UN Secretary General emphasizing that serious decisions have to be taken with regard to the future of the Conference on Disarmament. Last year, Ambassador Getahun of Ethiopia as the CD President added the issue of revitalization of the Conference in the CD’s Schedule of Activities. In 2011, Colombia circulated questionnaire on ‘how to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament’ to CD Member States during its presidency. Colombia also proposed the establishment of a Working Group on Revitalization of the CD to identify steps in strengthening the CD.

Revitalizing the Conference has been associated with concerns on the rules of procedures, the CD membership expansion, the role of the UN General Assembly towards the Conference, the existence of other fora outside the Conference, and the participation of civil society in the Conference.

Mr. President,

On one hand, we continue to hear voices of frustration and despair on the inability of the Conference to resume its substantive work after 16 year stalemate.

On the other hand, there are also voices calling to preserve the CD’s existence as the only standing multilateral forum mandated to negotiate instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In light of the challenges that may seem to impede the Conference in making further progress, we could not deny that initiatives have been taken by Member States to allow the debate on disarmament and arms control related issues outside the CD. The UN General Assembly last year adopted resolutions on the setting up of the Open Ended Working on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations and the Group of
Governmental Experts to discuss fissile material cut-off treaty. We believe that such initiatives may not be the last and possibly other initiatives such as the Switzerland’s proposal of 24 May 2013 will flourish if the CD fails to demonstrate the substantive progress in its work.

Nevertheless, CD is still appealing. There is a continuous interest from a number of states to become members of the Conference. Even some CD Member States support the appointment of a special coordinator on the expansion of the CD membership. This message reflects that the existence of the CD is still relevant and recognized.

To chart a way out of the existing impasse, special and continued efforts must be taken to revitalize the Conference and strengthen its mechanism.

Mr. President,

One of the prominent issues related to revitalizing the Conference is the participation of civil society.

At the beginning of this year’s session, the United Nations Secretary General in his message clearly stated a strong encouragement to engage more closely with civil society where there is strong support for nuclear disarmament.

CD is the only UN institution that non-governmental organizations are not allowed to participate while others, including the Human Rights Council, have effectively embraced the civil societies. In other disarmament related fora, civil society organizations provided substantive contribution to the elaboration of the issues discussed. Even their presence in the meetings is regulated in the respective fora’s rules of procedures. The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is a global concern gravely affecting socio-economic development and the well-being future generations.

Let us be more open-minded and pragmatic so we can tolerate a more inclusive process in the conduct of the Conference’s activities, among others through expanding the membership of the Conference and opening possibility for participation of civil society in the Conference.

I thank you, Mr. President.