Statement by H. E. Mr. András Dékány,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Hungary,
President of the Conference on Disarmament
12 February 2013

Mr. Director General,
Distinguished Ambassadors, Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My proposal for a Program of Work for the 2013 session has been officially circulated as document CD/1948. The concept and the text contained therein has not undergone any substantive changes compared to the unofficial version. It was at the plenary session two weeks ago when I first explained our rationale behind the proposal to you, and, since then, during the last two weeks, I have consulted with delegations and regional groups, listened to what they said and tried to answer all their questions. The text before you now is the result of that intensive consultation process: the multilateral character of nuclear disarmament negotiations has been clearly emphasized, and, as an additional guarantee, the possibility of the changing of mandates, if decided by the Conference by consensus, has been incorporated into the preamble, using the agreed language of resolution CD/1864, as requested by some delegations.

Let me say a bit more about the most crucial issue, paragraph 1 of the proposed text, containing the merger of the former nuclear disarmament and fissile material ban working groups into one under the umbrella of nuclear disarmament. Many members of G21 expressed to me their concern about nuclear disarmament, their first priority, being degraded by the presence of the issue of the ban on fissile materials in the same - merged - working group, and in particular by the phrase “as a first step”. Meanwhile, others made clear their disappointment with the elimination of the separate working group on the fissile material ban, which many of them see as contradicting previous consensus documents of the CD, the NPT or the UN General Assembly, which give the issue the highest priority and urgency. Let me reiterate again that, according to our reading of the proposal, those concerns may not pass the test of reality. As I already made it clear during my consultations, putting the fissile ban under the umbrella of nuclear disarmament, as envisaged at the origins of the Conference on Disarmament, at SSOD I, puts nuclear disarmament negotiations in an even more prominent place. Nevertheless, the fissile ban also receives an important guarantee in the mandate with the foreseen beginning - I repeat, beginning and not conclusion - as a first step. There is no conditionality; on the contrary, no part of the proposed mandate prevents anyone from starting immediately discussions on any of the four core issues, be that nuclear disarmament, the ban on fissile materials or any other core issue, if they are willing to do so.

I know that most of you are not entirely happy with the proposal - it is abundantly clear after the consultations. However, the stakes are enormous for the CD, and I hope and I know that all of you
are aware of this. As the former Egyptian Ambassador, Hisham Badr explained last year, we need to "leave our comfort zones". I know that the mandate contained in paragraph 1 of the present proposal is not in the comfort zone for many of you. But if considered carefully and together with the implementation plan, it should be clear that you have a fair and balanced draft Programme of Work before you. It may be a narrow path between the different views and comfort zones; a possible solution which delegations, regardless of their preferences, can live with, even if they do not like every element of it. I'm not asking you to vote in favor - I'm asking you not to stand up against it.

It is my hope that this document CD/1948 will receive the largest possible support.