Mr. President,

I wish to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this critical juncture. It is a pleasure to see neighbouring country steering this important body. I would also like to praise you for all your effort you have invested in successful start of the CD’s work. Slovakia fully subscribes to the statement delivered by Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

Unlike last year, we start this session in different circumstances. By adopting two resolutions, which have created a Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices and an Open-Ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament, the First Committee reminded us in strong terms that the situation in the CD is unsustainable and must be changed.

We cannot continue our business as usual. We understand that patience is needed but we believe that an action is key and essential in the current state of affairs. The adoption of a programme of work would reaffirm credibility and reiterate relevance of the CD. It would also confirm that we put the revitalization of this essential body on the right track.
Starting negotiations and substantive work on pressing issues that have been before us for a long time would not only be a step in the right direction but it is an obligation we have to meet.

Mr. President,

Proposals in a draft programme of work that you have submitted to us are worth studying and looking at carefully. We have noted with interest your suggestion to merge two of the core issues of our agenda. With this proposal, you are asking us to make a concession here. Nevertheless, we are ready to consider it seriously and in a good faith as it might allow not only to start a work on a fissban treaty but also to take forward nuclear disarmament negotiations in the multilateral format.

Continued stalemate is unsustainable. We cannot afford to wait any longer. We do have to fulfill not only our commitments to disarmament and non-proliferation but also to carry out our responsibility in this field.

With this in mind, Mr. President, we are ready to work with you and all partners towards an adoption of a programme of work based on your proposal. At the same time, we pledge our support to incoming presidencies for its full implementation.

I thank you, Mr. President