Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

At the outset I would like to thank my predecessor and friend Amb. Dekany for the dynamism with which he approached his responsibility as CD President and the efforts he made in seeking to get the CD to work.

India will try to show the same spirit and commitment.

India’s intention as CD President is to reinforce the position of the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. India’s national priorities are well-known. Nuclear disarmament continues to be our highest priority. We would like to see the CD return to substantive work on the basis of a consensus Programme of Work such as - CD/1864. We would also like to see the role of the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum upheld and strengthened. We intend to be faithful to and discharge our responsibilities strictly in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the CD.

Dear colleagues, my distinguished predecessor’s efforts in putting forward a draft Programme of Work were valuable not only in terms of the focus on the priority issue of getting the CD back to substantive work but also in terms of a smooth and substantive start to the 2013 session. We would endeavour to continue in the same vein, consulting widely and listening intently to all points of view.

I look forward to working with you closely in these four weeks and for the rest of the year in our common task to uphold this forum and advance its work.