Statement by Mr. Mark Versteden
Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 20 August 2013

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the CD and assure you of the full support of my delegation.

As you know together with Switzerland and South Africa the Netherlands has been one of the initiators of UNGA resolution 66/66 which was aimed at the revitalization of the disarmament machinery and in particular the CD.

Against this background we welcome all three proposals by Mr Tokayev which are aimed at the revitalization of the CD and we thank you for bringing them under our attention again.

We welcome the adoption of CD/1956 rev1 and look forward to the start of the Informal working group. We stand ready to actively contribute to its work and sincerely hope this working group can indeed produce a Programme of Work which will enable us to start negotiations - which is our real work - here in the CD.

We think it is also high time to review our work methods. Some will say that our work methods have served us well in the past to negotiate treaties. Although that is true, even a well-functioning factory should every now and again review if they cannot improve their work methods with a view to enhance efficiency. And for this factory it's high time to look at its work processes as its reputation has been damaged by the very limited production and output for the last 15 years.

Mr. President,

In your paper you have put forward some interesting and pragmatic ideas on the work methods which in our view should be seriously considered by the CD.

We can support the further exploration of your proposals regarding lengthening CD presidencies and taking UNGA resolutions into account in the Programme of Work. We also agree that we should take a good look at what we exactly mean by consensus and address the question if we need the consensus rule for everything we do. We furthermore can support the nomination of a coordinator for addressing the expansion of the membership of the CD. And we also think that the CD may indeed profit from a larger role of civil society in our deliberations.

Finally, Mr. President, you have put for us a range of questions on several aspects of our work methods. We are still studying these carefully and will come back with our views on them in due course.

I thank you for your attention.