Mister President,

We thank you for your efforts towards the adoption of a programme of work by the CD and for the draft project you have submitted to this effect under the reference CD/1952.

We take note with regret that the CD remains unable to adopt a programme of work.

Switzerland has long indicated that it stands ready to take part in negotiations on all four core issues on the CD agenda. We believe that to be of value, a programme of work should take us forward in terms of substance. It should be ambitious enough so that we either undertake negotiation, or at least move into that direction.

The events of the past few days have once again highlighted that the methods of work of the CD do not facilitate reaching consensus but make it more difficult. And I am not referring necessarily here to a change of the rules of procedure or questioning the rule of consensus.

The difficult task of developing a programme of work is handed to one individual, the president, instead of taking the form of a collective exercise. Delegations are not provided with the opportunity of developing an ownership of a draft programme of work.

These events highlight once again the urgent need that we look at our methods of work. In this context, my delegation would like to reiterate the proposal it has recently made that we look at these working methods in the framework of a structured process.

I would like to also command Secretary-General Tokayev for his statement earlier this week and for the thoughtful proposals he has made. His proposals that we set up an informal group tasked with the elaboration of the programme of work and a subsidiary body looking at our methods of work warrant further consideration and we would urge other delegations to study them carefully.

After 17 years of fruitless attempts at adopting and implementing a programme of work, we hope that the CD will now rapidly act on the basis of such proposals.