Statement of the Arab Republic of Egypt
To the Conference on Disarmament

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Check Against Delivery
Mr President,
Let me at first congratulate you on assuming this important task as the first president of the 2013 session, and wish you all the luck in carrying out your task. Let me also through you thank the United Nations Secretary General for his address to the Conference on Disarmament that was delivered by Mr. Kassym-Jomrat Tokayev the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General to the CD and the CD Secretary General.

As one of the original members of the so called Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament established in 1961, Egypt has actively participated in this fora and its successors in negotiating multilateral disarmament instruments. As we begin a new session in 2013, we reiterate the position of the CD, as was recognized by the Tenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the First Special Session on Disarmament - the so called SSOD-I, being the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and we look forward to see the efforts of the 2013 session to bring the CD to its full potential.

Mr. President,
As we have just passed the agenda for the 2013 session, and as we look forward to a successful year, we cannot but look back at 2012 with a particular sense of disappointment. Indeed, despite the high hopes that marked the beginning of last year, the agenda of disarmament witnessed many setbacks:

- The CD again was unable to agree a program of work despite our collective efforts including the tabling of draft program of work CD/1933/Rev.1.
- The negotiating conference in July also failed to submit a draft on a text for an Arms Trade Treaty that could be agreed to by taking into consideration the aspirations and interests of the whole international community.
- But our biggest dismay yet came with the announcement of the co-conveners of their failure to hold in 2012 a conference on the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The failure to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction came despite the clear commitment of the co-conveners and the mandate given to
them. It also came despite the overwhelming support of the world community to the conference and despite the announcement of all countries of the Middle East-bar-one, namely Israel, their intention to participate in the conference, as well as the positive engagement of Arab countries in the preparations for the conference with the facilitator of the Conference, the Finnish Undersecretary Jaako Laajava. We reject any excuses given attempting to justify not holding the Conference in 2012, and we call upon the co-conveners to set, without any further delay, a date for convening this conference, which should take place before the Second Preparatory Committee of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

This delay in convening the conference on the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction raises serious and pertinent questions regarding the undertaking we make in multilateral disarmament fora and the commitments of the parties to fulfill those undertakings. Indeed, given the record of fulfilling commitments made, or rather the lack thereof, one has to fundamentally question the seriousness of the parties in taking those undertakings in the first place.

Mr. President,
As we look forward to the adoption by consensus of a balanced and comprehensive Program of Work, let me make our position clear. First, we consider nuclear disarmament the top priority for the global disarmament agenda. This priority of weapons of mass destructions was clearly underlined through the very first UN General Assembly resolution (UNGA Res.1/1946), and was later reiterated through SSOD-I. Yet despite this clear priority that is constantly reiterated by the Non-Aligned Movement and the G21 little can be shown in terms of concrete steps towards achieving this objective.

The NPT was an effort towards reaching a world free of nuclear weapons, but so far it has proved incomplete. Originally, the NPT was based on the so called "Grand Bargain" wherein non-nuclear weapons states agreed to forgo the development of nuclear weapons in return for all members of the Treaty "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament", while the inalienable right of peaceful uses of nuclear energy was further enshrined. Despite the non-proliferation commitments continue to be for the large part observed, the same could not be said about nuclear disarmament commitments and undertakings. We cannot wait indefinitely to
start negotiations in good faith towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Nor do we recognize the indefinite extension of the NPT, and the lack of its universality, as a tacit agreement to set in stone the current situation. In fact, the current situation is anything but a tenable proposition.

Mr. President,
It is often said there are two approaches to achieving nuclear disarmament: the first is the "big bang" or in other words commencing negotiations of a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention. In this regard, Egypt fully subscribes to the paper it presented on behalf of the Non-Alligned Movement to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and can be found in the document NPT/CONF.201O/WP.4.

The other approach often sited is the so called “step-by-step approach" of mutually reinforcing multilateral instruments towards the full elimination of nuclear weapons. Egypt had also availed itself of this approach. As a member of the New Agenda Coalition and within the context of the NPT, we take pride in our efforts towards the adoption of the 2000 NPT Review Conference of the concrete steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons; the so called "thirteen practical steps". Those steps were agreed under the chapeau of the unequivocal undertaking of nuclear weapons states to achieve nuclear disarmament. While reaffirming the 2000 package, the 2010 NPT review conference again agreed to an action plan that contained 22 actions on nuclear disarmament.

It is within this context of step-by-step approach that the prompt, faithful and full implementation of the 2010 Action Plan is crucial. Unfortunately, the first indications are not encouraging; indeed, the first due date contained within the 2010 Action Plan - that pertaining to the conference on a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction - has already been missed. Furthermore, the full implementation of nuclear-weapon States of their obligations under Article VI of the NPT and the achievement of universal adherence to the Treaty are much required to follow through with the step-by-step approach.

The objective we are trying to achieve is total elimination of nuclear weapons. How to achieve that we remain flexible, but we hold that the CD as
the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament is the appropriate venue to deal with this objective. We therefore expect any proposed program of work to include the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

It is often said that the next logical step in the path towards nuclear disarmament is to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. While refraining from engaging in a debate on what constitutes the next logical step, it is suffice to say that Egypt had always been supportive to the idea of concluding a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, as long as such a treaty would serve the objectives of both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Indeed, the Thirteen Practical Steps of 2000 included a call to commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament and to concluded such a treaty within five years of negotiations. Almost thirteen years later, we still await the commencement of such negotiations. However, as we look forward to the discussion on the mandate of a potential program of work for the CD or any other work related to fissile material, let me remind you of the exact language that was included in the thirteen practical steps. It says, and I quote, “The necessity of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.” Unquote.

We have joined the consensus on negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material on such basis. Consequently, we find it surprising that some countries seek to exclude stocks of fissile material from the scope of the treat, as for this treaty to be truly an instrument of nuclear disarmament and a legitimate step in the step-by-step approach towards nuclear disarmament it must deal with stocks of past production of fissile material. Anything short of that could only be described as a futile attempt to freeze the current situation of "haves" and "have-nots" and allow states to maintain stockpiles of fissile material that may potentially be used for nuclear weapons.
It is for that reason we seek that any proposed program of work that would include a mandate on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices would clearly indicate that we would be dealing with stocks of already existing production of fissile material as well as future production.

Mr. President,
We are also interested in promoting a peaceful space environment that would continue to serve as common heritage of mankind. Indeed, outer space has become so essential to our way of life that if turns to yet another theater of warfare we would all lose. History have shown us that it is much easier and safer to deal with an arms race before it starts than trying to curb it or roll it back once it is underway. It is thus essential that we prevent arms the race in outer space from ever starting. In the UN General Assembly, Egypt and Sri Lanka alternate every year in presenting a resolution on the prevention of arms race in outer space which receives the overwhelming support of the world community - only two countries usually abstain and we invite those two countries to join the world community in supporting the resolution. But it is here in the CD that we have to live up to our mandate and commence negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prevent arms race in outer space.

Mr. President,
We also look forward to the CD dealing with effective international arrangements for the five nuclear weapon states to assure non-nuclear weapons states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such assurance is a legitimate demand of the non-nuclear weapon states and is long overdue.

Mr. President,
We wish you a successful presidency and we remain ready within the previous parameters to assist you in your efforts to reach a consensus on a balanced and comprehensive program of work.

Thank you Mr. President