Statement by H. E. Mr. András Dékány,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Hungary,
President of the Conference on Disarmament
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Mr. Secretary-General of the CD,
Distinguished Ambassadors, Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for Hungary to assume the duties of the first President of the Conference on Disarmament in 2013. I am perfectly aware of the special responsibilities this position entails. I know it sounds cliché, but it is truly a challenge for me personally and for my team, a challenge which we are happy to take on with enthusiasm and optimism, mitigated only by the experience of the past decade and a half of the political realities and dynamics within the CD.

Let me first extend my most sincere thanks to my predecessor, Ambassador Hellmut Hoffman of Germany, for the excellent work he has done as the last CD president of 2012, as well as for his help and insights with regard to my consultations leading up to the beginning of this year’s session of the Conference.

In December 2012 the world commemorated the 200th anniversary of the publishing of one of the most well-known pieces of German - and in fact European - literature: Grimms’ Fairy Tales. Among the more than 80 tales published in the first edition, many of which were the first ever gothic thrillers in literary history, there is one story that can readily be evoked when one is discussing the state of play in the Conference on Disarmament: the Sleeping Beauty. Let me remind you that in the original story it took one hundred years for the prince to reawaken the sleeping beauty with his kiss. The CD cannot afford itself the luxury of sleeping for this long, and in fact, the awakening kiss has been long overdue. We will do our utmost to bring a conclusion to this fairy tale closer to reality...

2013 may be the make-or-break year for the CD. The Conference had proved its usefulness and effectiveness in the past, but for the last 16 years it has been in a stalemate. No wonder this state of affairs has led to a great deal of frustration and even anger by many states and actors in the international community. Most of us were there in New York for last year’s First Committee session where this frustration led to action, supported by the majority of UN member states, taking discussions and deliberations on issues on the CD’s agenda effectively outside of the Conference.
This proves that the revitalization of the Conference, that is the beginning of substantive work is more urgent than ever. We are convinced that reasons for the stalemate are not procedural, but clearly political, therefore – and without the possibility of evoking the magical kiss of a prince - the situation can only be resolved through the common efforts of the membership of the Conference. Revitalization means the CD starts working, and the very first step towards a working CD is the adoption, by consensus, of a Programme of Work of the Conference.

I firmly believe that outside developments bring us a renewed sense of urgency to take on our obligation to continue to work towards a Program of Work which covers every item on the CD’s agenda. The understanding of the Hungarian presidency is that under Rules 28 and 29 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference it is our duty and obligation, as the first presidency of the annual session, to submit a draft Program of Work for consideration and, if possible, adoption by the Conference. I have already had, as incoming president, a number of opportunities to consult with regional groups as well as with individual member states about their views on how to best use the coming weeks to reach our common goal. My intention is to continue this intensive consultation process until a text emerges that has sufficiently broad support, and thus can be put formally before you. During the weeks to come, in parallel with the general CD proceedings, I will continue to reach out informally to member states as well as to regional groups in order to find the best formulation of the elements of a Program of Work. I hope I can count on your cooperation and openness with regard to my plans.

Last but not least, allow me to say a few words about CD observers. Year after year, observer states show great interest in following our deliberations and taking part in the work of the Conference. Their commitment and interest, in my view, deserves to be recognized through the eventual enlargement of the CD. Civil society is equally committed to moving the CD agenda forward. I believe that they belong to our wider family and I look forward to working with them and to listening to their voice during my tenure. I am also looking forward to cooperating with my P6 colleagues of India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, and Ireland.

I wish everyone of us a successful and productive session.