I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

Let me first welcome you in Geneva. The European Union would like to reiterate its commitment to the Conference on Disarmament and its support to the efforts of all CD Presidents to reach an agreement on a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work. In this context, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Ambassador of Indonesia for his hard work and untiring efforts to reach consensus on a program of work.

We are deeply concerned by the continued dysfunction of a crucial part of the disarmament machinery: the on-going stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament.

In its resolution 67/72 on the Report of the Conference on Disarmament, the UN General Assembly called upon this Conference to intensify further consultations and explore possibilities to overcome its ongoing deadlock of well over a decade by adopting and implementing a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work at the earliest possible date during its 2013 session bearing in mind the decision on the programme of work adopted by the Conference on 29 May 2009 (CD/1864) as well as other relevant proposals. It also requested all States members to cooperate with the successive Presidents of the Conference in their efforts to guide the Conference to the early commencement of its substantive work, including negotiations, in its 2013 session.

It is in the hands of all members to restore the CD to the central role it can play in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and multilateral disarmament. The CD, in accordance with its mandate, has a crucial role to negotiate multilateral treaties. Its on-going stalemate, despite recent attempts to achieve consensus remains deeply troubling.

In this context, we continue to urge all States to join consensus in adopting a Programme of Work, which inter alia would enable negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

* Accession Country Croatia and the Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, remains a clear priority. Such a treaty constitutes an urgent necessity in the nuclear disarmament field as a complement to the NPT and the CTBT.

National security concerns, while legitimate, can and should be addressed as part of the negotiation process rather than as a prerequisite. Confidence-building measures could be taken immediately, without the need to wait for the commencement of formal negotiations. In this regard, pending negotiations and the entry into force of the treaty, the European Union calls on all States concerned to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We reaffirm our commitment to engage in substantive discussions on all the other core issues included in CD/1864: on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination, including on approaches toward potential future work of a multilateral character; on all issues related to the prevention of arms race in outer space and on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as on other issues.

We would also like to reiterate EU Member States' longstanding commitment to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. In line with GA Resolution 67/72, we underline the importance of continuing consultations on the expansion of the membership and strongly support appointing a special co-ordinator on the expansion of the CD membership.

Consistent with our engagement with civil society, we are looking forward to the enhanced interaction between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, thus strengthening the contribution of NGOs and research institutions to the work of the Conference.

We welcome your indications of your intention to consult the CD membership on these issues.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our strong commitment to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. It is clear that the adoption of a Programme of Work will require sustained political efforts from all of us. If the current standstill continues, the debate will increasingly focus on other options to allow States to make progress in multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament. The remaining part of 2013 could still be used effectively to put the CD back on track. We urge all Member States of the Conference to engage constructively and we will do the same.

Thank you.