Mr. President,

On behalf of the German delegation I would like to welcome you in Geneva.

As a result of the alphabetical order in which the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament rotates, you are confronted with the challenge of assuming the presidency right after you have taken up your post in Geneva. This is a demanding task. For its successful conclusion we wish you all the best.

Mr. President,

The German delegation has always taken the view that it is an important task for every president of the CD to make an effort to reach consensus on a programme of work. Therefore, we can only welcome your stated intention to approach your presidency in this spirit. You can count on the full support of the German delegation in this endeavour.

Mr. President,

As a result of the deadlock reaching now its 17th year, the Conference on Disarmament is in a critical state. A direct result of this state of affairs is the establishment of the Open Ended Working Group “taking forward nuclear disarmament”. Establishing this Working Group was supported by an impressive majority of member states in the UN General Assembly. It has recently taken up its substantive work in Geneva and it will report on its work to the next UN General Assembly.
Mr. President,

While Germany participates actively in the OEWG, we continue to believe that a revitalized Conference on Disarmament would still be highly desirable. It would provide a suitable framework for making tangible progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

However, this requires the CD finally to get its act together.

Many attempts have been made at agreeing a programme of work, which would allow the CD to do what it is meant to do, namely to work out new treaties in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. I will point out two examples of the recent past:

First the programme of work contained in document CD/1864 of 29 May 2009, actually adopted under the presidency of Algeria by consensus, but unfortunately never implemented.

Secondly the draft programme of work contained in document CD/1933 Rev.1 of 14 March 2012, tabled for adoption by the presidency of Egypt, objected to by one delegation only.

Both cases clearly demonstrate that in the recent past the CD came very close to start its work. Therefore, in our opinion, we are well advised to build on the approach contained in both texts.

Both texts cover all core issues on the agenda of the CD, from nuclear disarmament to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Like others, Germany is fully prepared to deal substantively with all these issues, because we regard all of them as important in our collective efforts to strengthen international security.

Both texts are also similar in operational terms. They seek the establishment of a working group to work on a multilateral, verifiable and non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Germany regards the early conclusion of such a treaty as an important building bloc on the road to a world without nuclear weapons. A goal, we all should be committed to. In our view, such a treaty would be most relevant both in terms of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. President,

One could ask, why does the CD need a programme of work in the first place?

The purpose of a programme of work is to give the CD a clear direction about what to do operationally. If we continue to seek an approach along the lines I just tried to describe, we would provide such an overall operational guidance. But as it does happen so often in diplomacy, it will only be possible if all sides are ready to abandon the search for ideal solutions, as ideal solutions will nearly always be mutually exclusive. Instead we should focus on the common ground of workable and consensual compromises.

Thank you.