Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to commend you for taking up the issue of Programme of Work, an issue of great importance to all of us, as our topic of discussion in today’s plenary.

The issue of Programme of Work has been the long sought-after cornerstone of our work. This is in line with Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedures of the Conference on Disarmament that requires the Conference to establish its Programme of Work. Numerous attempts have indeed been carried out and a number of drafts have been proposed, yet there is no single hint of consensus in sight. That leaves us with the document CD/1864 of 2009 as our last mark on the chart.

I highly appreciate Iran’s initiative to seek the views of Member States on their approach for a Programme of Work and to find the possibility of reaching a common ground. In this regard, I would like to share my view on the issue we are discussing, based on my understanding derived from my consultations during my presidency.

Mr. President,

Creative options in confronting and overcoming the Programme of Work could be sought in several areas. At the procedural level, the Conference should consider simplifying its Programme of Work, first by moving to a basic timetable of activities and then by focusing on setting mandates for working groups individually rather than collectively. More importantly, the Conference needs to develop a new work culture. In my view, there is a puzzling lack of initiatives by CD Member States to supplement the dutiful efforts of successive presidents to find a way through the longstanding impasse.

In moving forward, I believe new approaches should be found. Among others, the responsibility to devise a Programme of Work should no longer be entrusted as the sole responsibility of the CD President. In addition to President’s consultation, it is the time for CD Member States, through their respective regional groupings, to contribute their share of works and responsibility, in devising the text of the Programme of Work. Having said this, we should encourage the regional groups to come up with their respective draft Programme of Work, and based on those texts, submitted by different regional groups, we are trying to find a middle ground.

Secondly, there is also an ample room for innovation in terms of our timetable. Should putting the four core issues in a single Programme of Work or addressing all four core issues in one single year session of the CD has been proven to be difficult as we are witnessing in the last 16 years, then why don’t we start to consider to agree to discuss each core issue in a serial manner, on the basis of one issue per year. For example, core issue A in 2014, core issue B in 2015, core issue C in 2016 and so on.

Through the changing of our traditional approach, Member States could help the CD to resolve its existing problems.

Thank you, Mr. President.