Statement by H.E. Mr. Jüri Seilenthal,  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to United Nations Office  
at Geneva at the 2013 Session of the Conference on Disarmament  

Geneva, 10 September 2013

Mr President,

Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, please allow me to congratulate you on assuming the post of the Presidency of the CD and at the same time on the successful completion of your tasks by achieving the consensus on the draft report of the CD to the UNGA. We are satisfied with the way the issues of expansion of the conference and improving its working methods were reflected in this report. That includes the call for the appointment of a special coordinator to examine and make proposals on the enlargement of the CD. This very idea was elaborated by numerous delegations during the 2013 sessions and was also tabled by SG Tokayev, recently at the June plenary this year.

Mr President,

We deeply regret, that another year is passing by with the CD unable to start negotiations or even agree on a program for its work. We are frustrated by ongoing stalemate within the conference despite of the hard work by you and other CD presidents over long period of time. Moreover, there seems to be a minor likelihood that the Conference will be able to start negotiations soon. Unfortunately the Informal Working Group (IWG) was not able to reach a consensus on Programme of Work. We nevertheless would like to express the gratitude for allowing observer states to take part in the work of this group.

Mr President,

We would like to commend you for the informal paper you shared with us on the „Challenges and Future Directions“. It is an excellent paper asking important questions and giving us all food for thought how to move forward in revitalizing the CD. The proposals of SG Tokayev on the need of
the internal reforms are also properly reflected there. The questions of consensus rule of the Conference and length of the period of the presidency pose a right emphasis that should be elaborated further.

Furthermore we believe time has come to take concrete steps in order to start the suggested procedural reforms to improve the working methods of the conference, to enhance the engagement between the conference and civil society and to enlarge the membership. These are the necessary prerequisites to increase the legitimacy of the conference and I quote the SG Tokayev: "...We should not underestimate both practical and political value of procedural reform. Concrete steps to improve the functioning of the conference can be politically significant as a demonstration of the membership’s collective will to chart a way out of the impasse and can help to build trust." I unquote.

I would like to reaffirm our strong commitment to the CD as a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. But we have to have in mind that CD’s agenda encompasses global concerns and we believe that those concerns should be negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, with wider participation of interested states. Given the universal nature of the United Nations, we do not see any reason or moral justification why an interested State should not be allowed to participate fully and equally in the disarmament discussions and negotiations and to contribute to its aims.

We thank you, Mr President, for your open, transparent and efficient approach to make a step forward and commence a regular briefing of the IGOS’ coordinator during your presidency. We encourage next presidencies to continue this useful and fair practice.

I thank you, Mr President.