Mr. President
Distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament

As the 2013 session of the Conference draws to a close, I would like to make some observations about the past twenty-four weeks and take a forward look into 2014.

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and your predecessors for an active year. All six Presidents have placed their experience and expertise at the service of the Conference, and the search for common ground to direct the CD back towards substantive work.

I welcome the high level of engagement and interest by Member States in the Conference and its activities. We
need to **build on** and **sustain** this level of engagement. The international community rightly has **high expectations** of the Conference to **fulfil its mandate** for a **safer** and **more secure world** through disarmament. It is our collective **responsibility** and **obligation** to live up to their expectations, in a spirit of **flexibility** and **compromise**.

**Mr. President:**

Progress can be **slow** in multilateral diplomacy. This is part and parcel of the process, aimed at producing **sustainable results** with the **support** of the international community. But we **cannot** accept a standstill.

There is no doubt that the **differing security interests** of the Member States in this chamber have **considerably slowed the pace of work and progress** in the CD. But your **sustained commitment** to finding common ground is now in the process of bearing some fruit. I therefore welcome the decision to establish the **Informal Working Group** to **produce a Programme of Work** and I thank the membership for the **trust placed in my initial proposal**.
I believe that it can be a step, however small, in the right direction. It can help to lay the foundation for a new shared understanding of how the CD can resume substantive work.

Our expectations need to be realistic – it cannot happen overnight. But, we must also not allow it to become a diversion from substantive work and a reiteration of well-known positions.

While we work towards the realignment of the political priorities which would allow for negotiations to start in the Conference, the Informal Working Group can produce a Programme of Work providing a basis for such negotiations to hit the ground running.

It is therefore important that the Group be given the opportunity to continue its work next year. The three meetings you have had so far have been held in a constructive and interactive spirit. They represent an important first step.

The inter-sessional period can be used productively in support of the Conference. In this context, I would
encourage the Co-chair and the Vice Co-chair to continue their work after the First Committee session and convene open-ended informal consultations among members and observers of the Conference, with the close involvement of the outgoing and incoming Presidents. This would help maintain the momentum as we approach 2014.

It is my hope that these inter-sessional consultations will then be followed by an early revalidation of decision CD/1956/Rev.1 for the new year.

As I said on 18 June when I presented my most recent proposals, I continue to believe in the value, importance and necessity of the Conference on Disarmament as the single, multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. Today, I wish to reiterate my firm belief in and my unwavering commitment to the Conference. As Secretary-General of the Conference, you may rely on my full support in taking the current process forward.

Allow me to conclude, Mr. President, by expressing to you my most heartfelt personal and professional wishes of
success as you leave Geneva and move on to your next assignment. Your professionalism, pragmatism and sense of humour will be missed – and will no doubt inspire disarmament diplomats in the years to come.

Thank you for your attention.