Mr. President,

(…)

It is an honour and gives me great pleasure to join the Conference on Disarmament. Having worked for many years in the field of arms control, disarmament and security policy, in my Capital and abroad, I feel privileged to be able to join this esteemed forum.

Mr. President,

For my country, nuclear disarmament is a foreign policy priority. Given the current situation, the focus of German foreign policy will be on building bridges to further foster nuclear disarmament.

There are still around 17,000 nuclear warheads around the world. If this figure can be reduced, the world will be a safer place. To achieve this, bold steps forward are required for peace and security.

As German Federal Foreign Minister Westerwelle has said in reaction to President Obama’s speech in Berlin on 19 June: A world without nuclear weapons is a vision, not an illusion. Of course, this will not come about overnight. We need political will, astute diplomacy and, above all, perseverance. The world will become a safer and better place. Fewer nuclear weapons and effective global rules on nuclear non-proliferation are decisive steps towards Global Zero – a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

Concerning the Conference on Disarmament, Germany actively contributes to United Nations fora on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Regarding nuclear non-proliferation and
disarmament, Germany attaches fundamental importance to the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material.

Germany considers negotiations on such a treaty not only to be not only the next logical step but also a sensible building block towards nuclear disarmament and a world without nuclear weapons.

Germany also considers such a treaty to be an important non-proliferation instrument.

While regretting the persistent stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, which has prevented it from taking up negotiations on such a treaty for well over a decade, Germany strongly believes that first steps for its revitalisation should be urgently supported. We therefore are fully committed to revitalising and enhancing the UN Disarmament Machinery, as called for by the UN Secretary-General, that is, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the First Committee of the UN General Assembly.

Mr. President,

I would also like to seize the opportunity to underline the importance of the Biological Weapons Convention. We are strongly supporting the chairperson designate, Judith Körömi with her intention to “bring in more voices” to the BWC-process. The issue of biological weapons and the increasing threat emanating from biological materials used as weapons poses new challenges and the BWC should be used as an instrument to react.

In 2016 it will be 20 years since the Conference on Disarmament actively and successfully conducted and concluded disarmament negotiations. Despite this sad anniversary drawing nearer, I would like to conclude on an optimistic note: I am confident that during the time of my tour of duty here in Geneva, we will jointly succeed to overcome the present stalemate and make the Conference on Disarmament again the multilateral disarmament forum of the international community.

Thank you very much.