Statement by
H.E. Ms Tsholofelo Tsheole,
Deputy Permanent Representative of the
Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa
to the United Nations and Other International Organisations on the occasion of
the First Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, Part 1

23 January 2024

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished
Permanent Representative of Vietnam on behalf of the Group of 21 (G21).

My delegation wishes to congratulate H.E Dr Anupam Ray, Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for
assuming the role of the first President of the CD for 2024. I would also like to welcome
the new Permanent Representatives of Finland, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Norway,
and Pakistan and wish you well in your tenure.

I further take this opportunity to express appreciation to you Mr President for your
outreach activities prior to the start of the 2024 CD Session, to share the plans of the
first Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is our hope that this early work
will set us on a good path during this session.

Mr President,

Our collective peace and security is at a critical juncture. South Africa notes that we
are working in a difficult geopolitical context which is intensified by heightened
geopolitical tension combined with major disagreement in the nuclear disarmament
and non-proliferation area. The dismal reality is that these developments illustrate
unambiguously the importance for progressing with urgency in our efforts in the CD.
Accordingly, my delegation once again reiterates the importance of the Conference
on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body of the international
community on disarmament and calls for the urgent resumption of its function
according to its mandate.

Mr President,

Given the global implications of our work, it is of paramount importance to ensure
inclusiveness and a sense of ownership in the work of the CD through the participation
of all UN Member and Observer States. In this regard, my delegation recognises the

critical need to ensure that the CD is more inclusive and calls for the successful resolution of the matter regarding the requests for observer status and the expansion of membership. The need to ensure that the world becomes free of nuclear weapons and to achieve global peace and security is a collective responsibility, and the CD must be able to demonstrate this.

Mr President,

The work of the CD is becoming increasingly necessary and relevant as global security threats are rapidly increasing. It is therefore hoped that we can achieve substantive outcomes toward ending the inaction of this body and start working towards achieving nuclear disarmament. My delegation appeals to all delegations to work together to ensure that the CD regains its credibility and is indeed able to conduct substantive work of the Conference during its 2024 session.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes you well in the Presidency of the Conference, and expresses our support to contribute towards exploring options to unlock the potential of this body.

I thank you.