

Conference on Disarmament National Statement by Canada

January 2025

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me first congratulate you on being the first President of the CD in 2025 and wish you, your and all other delegations a wonderful and successful New Year. Our delegation thanks Ambassador Turner for his valuable contributions to our work in Geneva and passes our best wishes to him. We also welcome the new Ambassadors taking up their duties at the CD this year.

There is no denying that the international security environment remains challenging as we move into 2025. Russia is continuing its war of aggression against Ukraine and working with the DPRK to that effect. Conflicts are also ongoing elsewhere, including in the Middle East, Sudan and Myanmar. The DPRK is engaging in illicit nuclear and missile programs and proliferation concerns persist in the Middle East. The situation is complex but not unprecedented and it should not be an excuse for paralysis. The CD was able to negotiate disarmament agreements during the Cold War, and it stands to reason that we should be capable of doing so again.

The Conference on Disarmament can and must work again – if we let it. To revive this body and effectively negotiate treaties, we cannot be afraid to change even the most foundational elements of the CD. The very structure of six rotating presidents per session reflects the Conference's ingrained appreciation for diverse

perspectives and methods of work that necessarily ebb and flow with the dynamic security environment.

We are pleased to see, Mr. President, that you, and hopefully all six CD presidents have an ambitious plan to put the subsidiary bodies to work, as we all committed to do during the 2024 session.

Canada's hope is that we can focus on issues that are both ripe for action and in need of urgent attention.

Canada looks forward to engaging on the agenda items covered by the five subsidiary body topics. In particular, we urge tangible progress on a treaty banning fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices and on a treaty on radiological weapons. We would also welcome discussions on artificial intelligence in the military domain.

Finally, we hope that procedural issues will not stand in the way of substantive work. The Conference must be willing to move beyond the zero-sum game of de facto vetoes, portrayed as "consensus-decision making". We are looking for a swift and positive outcome on the admission of observers, resulting in broad and active participation by interested states and international organizations. We are also hoping that subsidiary bodies will commence substantive work quickly. We thank you, Mr. President, and the other five Presidents of this year for your efforts, and we are ready to collaborate with delegations in implementing the CD's mandate.

Thank you, Mr. President.