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Remarks by Director-General Mr. SUN Xiaobo at the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament

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(Geneva, 26 February 2024)

Your excellency Ambassador Ruddyard,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First, on behalf of the Chinese Delegation, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the rotating Presidency of the CD in 2024 and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support to make this high-level segment a full success.

Mr. President,

Over the past 30 years since the end of the Cold War, the international community has witnessed in-depth development of multipolarity, and the international strategic security architecture is facing new challenges. The global economy has been weighed down by protectionism and the abuse of the security concept, and the international system was impaired by unilateralism and bloc politics. The geopolitical tensions remain high. Frequent regional hot issues and rapid development of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, among others, pose a whole new set of challenges.

From China's perspective, the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. The trend of our times for peace, development, and win-win cooperation cannot be halted. Meanwhile, the deficits in peace, development, security and governance are growing. The country with the strongest military power in the world seeks absolute security at the expense of other countries' legitimate security concerns, breaches the spirit of contract and withdraws from international treaties, abandons multilateralism and opts for exclusive blocs. Such negative actions not only damage mutual trust and cooperation among countries, but also undermine global strategic balance and stability, leading to turmoil and instability around the world and stalemate of arms control process.

Seven years ago, President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech here in the Palais des Nations and put forward the fundamental principles of building a community with a shared future for mankind, providing Chinese insights and solutions on avoiding a lose-lose situation in international security. In April 2022, President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Security Initiative, stressing the importance of upholding a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. China believes that lose-lose is not a rational option, and win-win is the only way for us to bring a brighter future for humanity. We should follow the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, promote an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, to address the security challenges facing humanity and to achieve common security.

Mr. President,

In its history, the CD has negotiated and concluded several important arms control treaties, making significant contributions to eliminating the risk of nuclear war and maintaining global peace and security. Facing with severe international security situation, the CD needs to take proactive actions and play its due role in maintaining global strategic stability and advancing the multilateral arms control process.

First, we should uphold multilateralism and achieve common security.

In the era of globalization and facing complex and challenging security landscape, no country, big or small, can thrive in isolation. To achieve their own security, countries should not ignore the legitimate security concerns of other countries. To pursue absolute security and undermine others' legitimate security will only lead to one's own insecurity. Countries should hold and practice true multilateralism, respect each other, expand common ground while shelving differences, and advance multilateral arms control and disarmament process on the basis of common security.

Since the development of the first nuclear bomb, it has been the Sword of Damocles hanging over humankind. The appeal of non-nuclear-weapon states, calling for the removal of threats posed by nuclear weapons, is legitimate and reasonable and is also an important aspect in achieving common security. China is explicitly committed to a policy of not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-

weapon states and nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally. As early as 40 years ago, China proposed, at the CD, to negotiate and conclude an international treaty on providing Negative Security Assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states. Through long time discussions, the Negative Security Assurance issue has gained broad consensus and is the low-hanging fruit. It is also the common expectation of the non-nuclear-weapon states. The CD should step up its work and come up with a road map or timetable to promote the early conclusion of an international legal instrument on Negative Security Assurances. China calls upon other nuclear-weapon states to respond actively and support the proposal. China also calls upon nuclear-weapon states to sign and ratify the protocols to Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaties as soon as possible. I would like to reiterate that China is willing to take the lead in signing the Protocol to the South East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty and firmly supports the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Second, we should maintain consensus in nuclear disarmament and advance nuclear disarmament process.

The review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has failed to achieve substantive outcome in the last two review cycles. The international nuclear disarmament process is stagnated. The root cause to such situation is that certain nuclear-weapon state is trying to shift the focus of nuclear disarmament and get rid of its special and primary responsibilities that should be fulfilled. Not only this, certain country persists in its first use policy, keeps strengthening its military group featured with "nuclear alliances". It also engages in "nuclear sharing" and "extended deterrence" with its allies, and carries out nuclear submarine cooperation which has extreme risks of proliferation. Those negative actions increase the risks of nuclear arms race and nuclear conflicts, damage the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, erode global and regional strategic balance and stability, and destruct international nuclear disarmament process.

China is of the view that the international community should jointly make efforts to advance nuclear disarmament and reduce strategic risks. Six decades ago, China solemnly declares that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances. The policy is highly stable, consistent and predicable. It is, in itself, an important contribution to international disarmament process. Under current situation, China's proposition is that the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to fulfill the special and primary responsibilities and further reduce their nuclear arsenals in a substantive and significant manner, so as to create conditions for other nuclear-weapon states to join the nuclear disarmament process.

China calls upon nuclear-weapon states to negotiate and conclude a treaty on "mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons" or issue political statements in this regard. Countries that are part of "nuclear sharing" or "extended deterrence" arrangements should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national and collective security policies in a practical manner and terminate the inappropriate arrangements. In early 2022, leaders of the P5 issued the Joint Statement on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races and reiterated the vision that nuclear weapons cannot be used and nuclear war must never be fought, and also reiterated that none of the nuclear weapons are targeted at each other or at any other State. Members of the CD should work actively to put the Joint Statement into practice.

Third, we should balance development and security and oppose the practice of decoupling and severing.

After the Second World War, the international community established a whole set of conventions and treaties to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses are three pillars of equal importance, and should be promoted in a comprehensive and balanced manner to ensure the true realization of the principles and objectives of relevant conventions and treaties. Existing export control regimes, while emphasizing non-proliferation, are committed not to impeding peaceful uses and normal trade. However, certain country practices double standards, deliberately highlights security threats while downplaying the right of peaceful uses, and even draws ideological divisions in an attempt to transform existing regimes into a tool for decoupling and severing. This deviates from the original intention of relevant regimes and undermines international cooperation on non-proliferation.

China recognizes that each country has its own security concerns, but safeguarding one country's national security should not undermine the legitimate and reasonable development rights of other countries. In order to protect lawful rights of all countries to the peaceful uses of science and technology, China has twice submitted to UNGA the resolution Promoting International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses in the Context of International Security reflecting the resounding voice of developing countries. This year, China will once again submit this resolution to the General Assembly. The international community should strengthen cooperation on establishing a non-proliferation and export control order based on universal participation and non-discrimination, effectively address global security challenges, and ensure equitable access for developing countries to the benefits of scientific and technological progress.

Fourth, we should attach importance to the formulation of international rules in response to the challenge of emerging technologies.

In the face of rapidly evolving emerging technologies and challenges they present, it is imperative for the CD to adopt a developmental perspective in addressing these new security challenges. In recent years, the development of AI has surpassed all expectations, necessitating an acknowledgement of the associated security risks. Last year, China announced the Global AI Governance Initiative, advocating for "people-centered" and "AI for good" approaches, calling for greater representation and voice of developing countries, and supporting the UN's role as a primary channel for global AI governance.

In the field of cyber security, China maintains that international cyber and digital rules should be formulated under the UN framework, reflecting the collective will and interests of all parties involved. These rules should be modeled on the Global Initiative on Data Security to foster collaboration in building a community of shared future in cyberspace. In the field of outer space security, due to certain country's aggressive policies, there is an alarming rise in weaponization and arms race risks. The CD should promptly initiate negotiations on relevant legal

instruments to effectively maintain peace and tranquility in outer space. These issues are crucial for the development and security of all countries as well as for the well-being and future of mankind.

Fifth, we should promote the compliance of the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions and enhance the authority of the international arms control treaty regime.

Currently, facing a complex bio-security situation, all States should strengthen the BWC and adopt a legally binding protocol to the Convention, with a view to shaping a fair and effective verification mechanism in order to ensure the full compliance of the Convention. Complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons is the goal and objective of CWC. Based on the provisions of the Convention, Japan is required to complete the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons by 2012 as the latest. However, The Japanese side failed to complete the destruction and missed the deadline for four times. Less than one-fourth of the currently-known 400,000 Japanese abandoned chemical weapons have been destroyed. China urges Japan to earnestly fulfill its international obligations and to completely and thoroughly eliminate the harm of abandoned chemical weapons as soon as possible and return a clean land to the Chinese people. To prevent WMD from falling into the hands of terrorists, China supports the CD to negotiate an international convention on combating biological and chemical terrorist attacks.

Mr. President,

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the CD represents humanity's shared aspiration to beat swords into plough-shares and achieve peaceful development. It is important that all CD members could participate in the CD's work equally and universally to adopt the Program of Work based on mutual respect, and advance its substantive work. As the first rotating presidency in the 2022 session of the CD, China, together with other relevant parties, led the CD to adopt a decision on its work, making contribution in revitalizing the CD's work. In 2024, China would like to propose the following principles for the work of the CD:

Firstly, to positively maintain the authority of the CD. The role of the CD is irreplaceable and should be strengthened instead of being weakened. Any move seeking to set up an alternative forum will not help solve the problem but increase fragmentation and impair the entire arms control process.

Secondly, to demonstrate the political will to support the CD. All CD members should treat and discuss various issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner, earnestly respect each others' legitimate security interests and promote positive development in all aspects of the work of the CD.

Thirdly, to firmly uphold the principle of consensus. This principle of consensus is in line with the basic concept of "undiminished security for all". Abandoning this principle will aggravate differences and contradictions and lead to unpredictable consequences.

China is committed to the path of peaceful development and will never seek hegemony, never engage in expansion, and will not participate in any form of arms race. The development of China's national defense aims to meet its legitimate security needs and has always been contributing to the growth of world peace force.

China firmly supports multilateral arms control cause and appreciates the Secretary General's proposal to revitalize the disarmament mechanism and calls for all parties to join hands to earnestly safeguard and strengthen the status and role of multilateral disarmament machinery including the CD. China is willing to work with all parties to promote early commencement of substantive work in the CD and make unremitting efforts to build a world of lasting peace and universal security.

Thank you, Mr. President.