Mr President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*¹ and Iceland**², the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your Presidency, allow me first to congratulate you on the assumption of the post as first President of the Conference on Disarmament during its 2011 session. I would like to assure you, and the other P6 presidencies chairing the Conference on Disarmament during 2011, of the full support of the European Union in your efforts to guide the work of this conference and to overcome its longstanding impasse. I would, furthermore, like to commend you for the successful adoption of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament for this annual session.

We value highly the system of work of the P6 presidencies, which has made a considerable contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The European Union is keen to see this model of close and continuous coordination among the presidents of the annual sessions continue, and we therefore wish success to the P6 of 2011: Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba and the DPRK. As last year, we will continuously support your efforts.

Mr President,

We have heard again the urgent appeal made by the UN Secretary General to this Conference to commence substantive work without further delay and to adopt a Programme of Work at the earliest possible date. The European Union fully supports and endorses this appeal. All CD members bear the responsibility of making the CD deliver according to its mandate.

Indeed, last autumn, the High-Level Meeting in New York and the UN General Assembly's First Committee heard the overwhelming call for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament. The CD should heed this call and the EU would like to see effective follow-up to it. Your strong personal commitment, Mr President, as well as the efforts of your Government, will be an essential and extremely welcome contribution to this process. We hope that the consultations you conducted during the inter-sessional period will enable the adoption at the

¹ Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
² Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
earliest possible date of a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work, followed by its swift implementation.

Mr President,

Let me recall that the European Union attaches a clear priority to the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) on the basis of document CD/1299 of 24 March 1995 and the mandate contained therein, and subsequently reiterated in CD/1864. For the European Union, launching these negotiations is urgent and important. All CD Member States should appreciate that national security concerns, while legitimate, should be addressed as part of the negotiation process rather than as a prerequisite. We also consider that there are confidence-building measures that can be taken immediately, without the need to wait for the commencement of formal negotiations. This is why we call on all states possessing nuclear weapons to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The European Union also remains ready to engage in substantive discussion on the other items that were included in CD/1864: on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination, including on approaches toward potential future work of a multilateral character; on all issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as on other issues on the Conference on Disarmament agenda.

Mr President

Our goals and priorities for work in the CD have not changed, nor has the European Union’s commitment to the CD as the single permanent multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations diminished. At the same time, we are aware that the adoption of a Programme of Work will require sustained political effort. If the CD’s stand-still continues, there is no doubt that the international community will increasingly reflect on options and, if necessary, identify other ways to ensure progress in multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament.

The year 2011 must be used effectively to put the CD back on track. We cannot afford another year of endless and ultimately fruitless consultations and procedural manoeuvres. The credibility and legitimacy of the CD is at stake. The UNGA First Committee has insisted on the urgent need to revitalize the work of multilateral disarmament bodies and urged the CD to agree early in 2011 on a programme of work including the immediate commencement of negotiations on a FMCT. We believe that the Conference has an obligation to ensure serious follow-up, before we report back in the autumn.

In 2011 the Conference on Disarmament must build on the momentum generated by renewed efforts to seek a safer world for all and to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the objectives of the NPT. It must make a substantive contribution to global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The European Union remains committed to this task and we expect similar commitment from all CD members. We therefore appeal to all delegations to the Conference on Disarmament to show the flexibility, which is needed by all of us, if we want to overcome the longstanding stalemate.
Mr President,

The European Union appreciated the enhanced engagement last year between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament. We would welcome a similar approach by the Conference in 2011, thus strengthening the contribution of NGOs and research institutions to the work of the CD.

Finally, Mr President, the European Union would like to remind you of our longstanding attachment to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. We support the call made by the informal group of observer states to the CD, including some EU Member States, to appoint in 2011 a special co-ordinator on expansion of the CD membership.

Thank you, Mr President.