Introductory remarks by Mr. Michael Møller
Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament
Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the
Conference on Disarmament
Conference on Disarmament plenary on the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda

Tuesday, 7 August 2018
Mr. President, Ambassador Doudech,
Excellencies, distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure to be with you this morning, under your presidency, Ambassador Doudech, at the start of what I hope is going to be an interesting and fruitful discussion on the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, entitled “Securing our common future”, in which he outlined his three priorities: “disarmament to save humanity, disarmament that saves lives, and disarmament for future generations.” He specifically underlined the importance of partnerships and called on all stakeholders “to look at the principal multilateral fora, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission,” calling for them to be reinvigorated.

The agenda “aims to be comprehensive, but not exhaustive. It proposes solutions, and it raises questions. It is not intended to replace the responsibilities of Member States, nor is it meant to impose any specific measures on them.”, as the Secretary-General wrote in his foreword. It should “reinvigorate dialogue and negotiations on international disarmament, stimulate new ideas and create new momentum.” It is therefore very timely, Mr. President, that the Conference on Disarmament now looks at the agenda and engages in this important dialogue under your leadership.
The positive responses to the agenda, and the discussions it has generated so far, are encouraging.

The agenda is not simply a food for thought paper, or just the result of a brainstorming exercise which benefited from consultations with experts from Member States, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations. It makes suggestions for concrete actions, which are linked to the broader international agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals, our Global Roadmap for action.

The actions in the agenda focus on practical measures. These aim at reinvigorating dialogue and negotiations on international disarmament, stimulate new ideas and create new momentum. They also aim at integrating disarmament into the priorities of the whole United Nations system, laying the foundations for new partnerships and greater collaboration. Finally, they indicate where the Secretary-General intends to personally engage and support Member States in carrying out their responsibilities.

In order to take forward the actions in the Agenda, the Office for Disarmament Affairs is working on an Implementation Plan, which should be released in September. The Implementation Plan will lay out specific steps and activities that will be undertaken, and it will indicate where support from Member States will be needed. It will also serve as a basis for monitoring progress.

The importance of engaging with civil society cannot be overstated. And I welcome initiatives aimed at building stronger partnership across disciplines and institutions. The “Geneva Dialogues” serves as one such example, where UNODA and UNIDIR teamed up with other non-UN disarmament platforms in Geneva to organise dialogues on the Agenda itself, and to contribute to shaping how the actions in the
Agenda are taken forward. They are structured around the three core priorities and partnerships.

The forthcoming sessions will be on Wednesday, 15 August on Disarmament that saves lives, Wednesday, 29 August on Disarmament for future generations and Wednesday, 5 September on Strengthening partnerships for disarmament. I encourage you to attend and participate in these discussions.

I would also like to commend the President for his personal commitment to broadening and deepening the dialogue between the CD and with civil society. Although we made some real and tangible progress this year in the context of the CD subsidiary bodies, we need to bring some new impetus to our discussions and deliberations.

In this context, let me remind you of the forthcoming informal Civil Society-CD Dialogue hosted by me on August 17. This third Civil Society Forum will provide an opportunity for exchanges on scientific advancements, technological developments and disarmament with a particular focus on the convergence of SDG goal 9 on Industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and SDG Goal 17 on Partnership. The dialogue will, of course, also be an important additional venue to continue the discussion on the SG`s Disarmament Agenda and inform implementation efforts.

I look forward to a lively discussion on some of these cutting edge issues that are squarely in front of this august assembly.

Regarding the Conference on Disarmament, the Secretary General underlined in his speech on 24 May, that reinvigorating it requires “improved coordination, an end to duplication, better use of expertise, and above all, the political courage to shift
positions”. The Secretary-General made the clear commitment to “work with Member States and investigate possible ways to achieve this”.

Mr. President, I welcome this discussion this morning and you can count on my and my colleagues support as you move forward on all the crucial issues that urgently require the CD’s attention.

Thank you.