STATEMENT
BY

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DURING THE THEMATIC DEBATE ON DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

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Chairperson,

South Africa welcomes modest advances made during the past year in efforts to strengthen the disarmament machinery. However, the prolonged stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the lack of agreement in the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is still impacting negatively on the multilateral system resulting in States searching for alternative fora to deliberate pressing international security matters. A case in point is the successful Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) established on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations that resulted in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Chairperson,

South Africa welcomes the recommendations for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons by the 2017 Substantive Session of the UNDC. However, this body needs to be revitalised to match the current international security need or it will run the risk of becoming redundant. South Africa commends all the Presidents of the 2017 CD Session for their efforts to develop a Programme of Work (PoW). However, we are disappointed that the CD could again not reach consensus so as to resume substantive work, raising questions about its effectiveness as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. At the heart of the problem lies the continued resistance by a small number of States to implement their disarmament obligations and to subject themselves to the international rule of law. As a country committed to the resumption of substantive work in the CD, we have always exercised the greatest level of flexibility.

Chairperson,

We remain ready to consider any proposals that would genuinely assist in breaking the impasse in the UN multilateral disarmament machinery. Negotiations are essential if we are to strengthen the international rule of law, which is key to promoting peace and security, where all countries are able to play by the same rules. South Africa will remain actively and constructively engaged in the multilateral disarmament fora with a view to seeking solutions.

I thank you.