

**CANADIAN STATEMENT: DISARMAMENT MACHINERY
FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 71st SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Chair,

While many states are seized with the need to move forward on non-proliferation and disarmament issues, the system designed to do so continues to fail us. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) are mired in procedural discussions, and no discussions of real consequence are able to take place. We can lament the damage this has done to these institutions and the disarmament machinery as a whole, but more damaging still is that little progress is being made on key priorities identified by the General Assembly and the First Committee to bring greater peace and stability to our world.

A direct consequence of the inaction of the machinery has been the creation of parallel initiatives that bypass it with the aim of achieving some progress on disarmament from the outside. Recent examples include the Arms Trade Treaty, the Ottawa Convention, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. These initiatives reflect the understandable frustration of many states with the impasse we face and also, it must be said, the perception that perhaps not all states are equally committed to disarmament, or that some states may derive particular benefits from the status quo.

Canada, and we are not alone, has tried for a number of years to prevent the disarmament machinery's downward spiral into this helpless situation. It was in this spirit that we put forward a resolution in 2012 that created a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to examine possible aspects of a core CD issue – the FMCT. It was our hope that the CD would embrace the GGE's comprehensive technical discussions and see the true potential for engaging in this type of useful non-proliferation and disarmament conversation between states that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not.

While we were pleased with the widespread support the GGE report garnered at First Committee last year, we regret that the CD remained unable to build on this important groundwork in 2016. That the machinery is in trouble is undeniable when progress on longstanding disarmament priorities like the FMCT within the CD proved impossible, despite recent novel efforts to achieve a breakthrough. Despite this disappointment, Canada is not willing to give up just yet. This year, alongside Germany and the Netherlands, we are proposing an FMCT resolution that will establish a High-level Preparatory Group to engage with UN membership and build on the GGE report by developing recommendations for future treaty elements. We believe we have developed a credible and realistic proposal that will make meaningful progress toward the negotiation of this Treaty.

Reform of the machinery might also help. While agreement on an ambitious reform of the disarmament machinery would be difficult, Canada believes that a few modest and practical steps could help restore credibility to the machinery. For a start, revisions to the working methods of the CD and UNDC could greatly improve their operations in the interests of all states.

An obvious example is a re-examination of the CD's consensus rule, which was never intended to frustrate establishment of a Program of Work. Canada believes a review of the CD's rules, procedures and working practices, including the rotation and duration of its presidency, would improve its functioning. Therefore, Canada would support a collective effort within the CD in

2017 to take these small steps in order to better deliver on its core mandate. Even these small reforms will require significant political will and flexibility from all CD members, but our belief is that success here could encourage a broader spirit of cooperation and provide some momentum to help the CD effectively tackle the significant issues it was created to address.

Thank you, Mr. Chair