Madam Chair,

1. It is an honor to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

2. I congratulate you on your election to chair this substantive session of the Commission, as well as to the Vice-Chairs and Chairs of the Working Groups on their assumption. We also send our appreciation to Deputy Permanent Representative Gabriela Martinic of Argentina who presided as Chair in 2017, previous bureau members, as well as the previous chairs of the working groups from Venezuela and Bulgaria for their efforts in last year’s substantive session. The Movement assures you, Madam Chair, of its full cooperation in what it hopes will be a productive session with positive outcomes.

3. NAM underscores its longstanding position regarding the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiation in these areas. In this regard, the Movement reaffirms the relevance and centrality of the UNDC, with universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the UN multilateral disarmament machinery, to consider specific disarmament issues and submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

4. The UNDC has contributed in the past to the field of disarmament and arms control by adopting 17 guidelines, recommendations and declarations. NAM welcomes the adoption by consensus of the recommendation of the Working Group II of the UNDC entitled “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons”. NAM calls upon all Member States to achieve a consensus in the Working Group of the UNDC entitled “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”.

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5. NAM stresses the urgent need for achieving concrete results in the current UNDC cycle, and to that end, urges all Member States, in particular Nuclear Weapon States (NWS), to show required political will and flexibility. The Movement stands ready to cooperate actively and constructively with all parties in order to reach agreement on substantive recommendations on the agenda items of the Commission.

Madame Chair,

6. NAM reiterates its deep concern over the lack of progress in the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments by the NWS. NAM strongly calls upon them to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), made during the NPT Review Conferences, and the unequivocal undertaking that they provided in the 2000 Review Conference and further reiterated in the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty. NAM reiterates the continued validity of these obligations and commitments until they are fulfilled.

7. NAM stresses that progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential in strengthening international peace and security. In this context, the Movement stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by SSOD-I and as a multilateral legal obligation, should not be made conditional on confidence building measures, non-proliferation efforts or so-called strategic stability.

8. The Movement underlines that the General Assembly resolution 68/32 and its most recent version resolution 72/251, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament” provides a concrete roadmap to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament through the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

9. NAM stresses the importance of enhancing public awareness about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination, including through the observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

10. NAM affirms the importance of humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons and in promoting the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Movement expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate, and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment, and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. In this context we reaffirm the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. In this context, NAM recalls the advisory opinion of the
International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996 and supports substantive discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

11. NAM reaffirms the urgent need for conclusion of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances as a matter of high priority, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

12. The Movement underlines that all activities and plans related to improving existing nuclear weapons and developing new types of nuclear weapons contradict the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament as a multilateral legal obligation, and represent an act of noncompliance by the NWS to their commitments in this regard.

13. NAM reaffirms the importance of the application by NWS of principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in all measures related to the fulfillment of their nuclear disarmament obligations and undertakings.

Madam Chair,

14. NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of each State to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

15. NAM again stresses that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and nondiscriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation control arrangements should be transparent and open to participation by all States, and should not impose restrictions on access to material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes required by developing countries.

16. The Movement stresses that the issues related to proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means. Measures and initiatives taken in this regard should be within the framework of international law and should contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

17. NAM states Parties to the NPT regret the failure of the 9th NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final outcome document despite the efforts made by NAM delegations. This failure should serve as a stimulus to work harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT. NAM States Parties to the NPT stress the importance of fulfilling the commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Treaty, on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
18. NAM States Parties to the NPT further underline that the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, should be implemented without any further delay, and reaffirms that the Resolution remains valid until its objectives are fully achieved.

19. NAM States Parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the 2012 scheduled Conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East did not convene despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. This runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 Resolution, and violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. NAM States Parties to the NPT stress that the commitments and obligations of the Treaty depositories regarding the Zone as contained in the 1995 Resolution and the 2010 Action Plan remain valid until fulfilled. They strongly reject the alleged impediments presented by the Conveners of the aforesaid Conference for not having it convened on schedule. In this context, NAM States Parties to the NPT deplore that Israel is the only party in the Middle East that has rejected participating in the Conference as mandated in the 2010 Review Conference. NAM States Parties to the NPT call for the full and immediate implementation of the 1995 Resolution and the objective of 2010 Review Conference on the Middle East in order to avoid negative repercussions on the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT, its Review process, and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole.

20. In this regard, NAM recalls that in the Final Document of the Margarita Island Summit in September 2016, the Heads of State or Government, while strongly supporting the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East, called upon all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps for the establishment of such a zone and, pending its establishment, demanded on Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT nor declared its intention to do so, to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, to accede to the NPT without precondition and further delay, to place promptly all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards and to conduct its nuclear related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime. They expressed great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighboring and other States, and condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals. They also called for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material and facilities, resources or devices and the extension of assistance in the nuclear related scientific or technological fields to Israel.

21. NAM underscores the need for strong and genuine political will in support of multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.
22. NAM reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament to agree as soon as possible on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay in order for it to overcome its long-standing deadlock and to start its substantive work. In this context, NAM “calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on effective nuclear disarmament measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including, in particular, on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.”

23. “NAM remained seriously concerned at the negative security consequences of the deployment of strategic missile defence systems which could trigger an arms race(s) and lead to the further development of advanced missile systems and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons.”

24. NAM recognizes the common interest of all humankind and the inalienable, legitimate sovereign rights of all States in the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, and reconfirmed their stand to oppose and reject any act denying or violating it and emphasized that prevention of an arms race in outer space, including a ban to deploy or use weapons therein, would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. NAM further emphasizes the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms limitation and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements, and with the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space. The Movement also reemphasizes the urgent need for the commencement of substantive work in the CD, inter alia, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, taking note of the joint Russian-Chinese initiative of a draft treaty on the “Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects” (PPWT) presented in the Conference on Disarmament on 12 February 2008 and in 2014. NAM notes that this initiative is a constructive contribution to the work of the Conference, and is a good basis for further discussion toward adopting an international legally-binding instrument. In this context, they noted the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/27 on no first emplacement of weapons in outer space with a view to ensuring its exclusive peaceful use. NAM also welcomes the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/250 on “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space”, which calls for the establishment of a United Nations Group of Governmental Experts to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including, inter alia, on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. NAM further urges all Member States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. NAM calls for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.
25. In conclusion, the Movement underscores its full support for the UNDC’s work, which must be intensified through reinvigorated political will in order to achieve meaningful outcomes to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you, Madame Chair.