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MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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(Translation)

Statement by H.E. Ambassador CHENG Jingye
Head of the Chinese Delegation
at the 2006 Substantive Session of
United Nations Disarmament Commission

(New York, 10 April 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this Session of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We are pleased that after a deadlock for two years, the UNDC has restarted its new circle of deliberation. This offers an important opportunity for all countries to earnestly explore on how to further promote nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. I am confident that, with your experience and capability, you will steer this session to positive results. The Chinese Delegation is looking forward to carrying out full cooperation with you and other delegations.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the last 3-year review circle of the UNDC, the international security situation has undergone significant changes, with both good news and bad news. The developments indicate that, no matter in resolving traditional security issues or in tackling non-traditional threats, it calls for exhaustive, concerted cooperation of the international community, and demands full effective role of the UN and other multilateral mechanisms.

Nuclear disarmament is an important agenda item of this UNDC session. In recent years, there has been little progress in this area, and there have emerged some tendencies that aroused concerns and worries. The Chinese Delegation believes that, in order to promote nuclear disarmament, the international community should strengthen its efforts in the following aspects:

Firstly, maintaining global strategic balance and stability. Global strategic stability is the basis of nuclear disarmament. Relevant countries should stop research, development and deployment of missile defense systems

that are disruptive to global strategic stability, and refrain from introducing weapons into outer space.

Secondly, the two countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should further reduce their arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner so as to create conditions for comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament.

Thirdly, nuclear weapon states may consider taking appropriate intermediate steps in nuclear disarmament on the basis of the principles of “maintaining global strategic balance and stability” and “undiminished security for all”.

Fourthly, relevant countries should sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as soon as possible so that the treaty will enter into force at an early date. Before its entry-into-force, it is essential that moratoria on nuclear testing be observed.

Fifthly, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva should reach agreement on a programme of work as soon as possible and conduct substantive work on nuclear disarmament, security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states, fissile material cut-off treaty and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Sixthly, nuclear weapon states should conclude an international legal instrument on complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons as early as possible. Pending achievement of this objective, nuclear weapon states should, as a first step, renounce the first use of nuclear weapons and undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states or nuclear weapon-free zones.

China has consistently advocated complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and exercised utmost restraint in the size and development of nuclear weapons. China has never been a part of any nuclear arms race, and always pursues a policy undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and in any circumstance, and unconditionally

undertaking not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear weapon-free zones. China acts in strict observance of its commitment of a moratorium on nuclear testing pending the entry-into-force of the CTBT. China has signed all relevant protocols to nuclear weapon free zone treaties open to signature, and actively supported efforts of relevant regions in establishing nuclear weapon-free zones.

Mr. Chairman,

China firmly opposes proliferation of nuclear weapons in any form. Nuclear weapon proliferation has complex root causes and should be addressed comprehensively. In this connection, we propose that the following measures should be taken:

Firstly, countries should pursue a new security concept based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. We should give up Cold War mentality, improve international relations, respect each other's security interests, and work to create an international and regional security environment favorable to nuclear non-proliferation and solution of the proliferation issues concerned.

Secondly, it is important to earnestly safeguard and strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. The NPT, as the corner stone of nuclear non-proliferation, should have its integrity and authority maintained and its effectiveness and universality strengthened. Both the nuclear weapon states parties and the non-nuclear weapon states parties should observe their respective NPT obligations in good faith.

Thirdly, countries should be committed to nuclear non-proliferation by political and diplomatic means within the framework of international law. Relevant measures should be conducive to maintaining international and regional peace and stability. Proper solutions should be sought through cooperation and dialogue rather than confrontation or coercion.

Fourthly, the relationship between non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy should be addressed in a balanced and harmonious manner. States' legitimate rights for peaceful use of nuclear energy should be fully respected while ensuring the goal of non-proliferation. Double-standard will not be conducive to international non-proliferation efforts.

Fifthly, it is essential to observe multilateralism, give full play to the role of the UN and other international organizations and pursue democratic decision-making on the basis of full participation by all parties, so as to ensure the just, reasonable and non-discriminatory nature of nuclear non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the field of conventional arms is conducive to international and regional security and stability. We believe CBMs in the field of conventional arms should go in line with the following principles:

Firstly, the precondition of any CBMs should be undiminished security for all countries. Only in such precondition and on the basis of promoting universal security for all countries can relevant initiatives receive universal support and participation.

Secondly, different measures should be adopted in line with different regions and situations, and countries should seek common ground while shelving differences. The inherent complexity of conventional disarmament, along with regional disparity around the world, determines that there is no fixed formula in this regard. Regional confidence-building experience and measures could provide reference. However, they should neither be copied mechanically nor be imposed upon others.

Thirdly, CBMs should be developed in a step-by-step manner. In the current situation, discussions should focus on issues of principle, such as pursuance of defensive military policy, keeping armaments at reasonable

levels, and security cooperation not targeted to a third country. This will help promote consensus and provide a basis for discussions on specific confidence-building measures.

China pursues a national defense policy that is defensive in nature. Over the past two decades, China has downsized its military personnel by nearly 2 million. Such wide scope and magnitude of unilateral disarmament are rarely seen in the history of international arms control and disarmament.

China pursues a good-neighborly and friendly policy aimed at building friendship and partnership with neighboring countries. China attaches great importance to and actively promotes cooperation on regional disarmament and CBMs, and has reached a series of agreements and consensus with its neighboring countries. China is also exploring new ways of CBMs with relevant countries in such frameworks as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

Mr. Chairman,

As the only multilateral disarmament deliberation body, the status and role of UNDC are irreplaceable. The improvement of UNDC's working method should be based on full consultation. Relevant measures should be conducive to strengthening, rather than weakening the status and role of UNDC. The Chinese Delegation hopes that we will further explore the potentiality of the UNDC through extensive discussions, with a view to facilitating the UNDC to continue its contributions to multilateral arms control.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.