Remarks by H. E. Mr. Li Song of China
At the CD Plenary Meeting on 13 August 2020

Mr. President,
The Chinese delegation congratulates you on your assumption of the Presidency of the CD. As always, you can count on our active support in your efforts and that of the P6+2.

Before elaborating my view on the work of the CD and on multilateral arms control issues, I am compelled to express my strong opposition to the vilification, accusation and attacks on China in the US ambassador's statement. Regarding the issues involved in his statement, I have repeatedly expounded China’s position at this forum. I have no intention of starting another round of polemic exchanges with him, but I have to make some principled responses to his statement today.

The CD is an intergovernmental negotiating forum. I'm the Chinese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Disarmament Affairs, mandated with the task of working with colleagues here. If the US side has any concerns on China, they should come to me. This is in line with the diplomatic protocol and rules. Who has given them the right to bad-mouth the Communist Party of China (CPC), which is well loved and supported by all Chinese people? I'd like to ask you, Mr. President, to put an end to this unreasonable practice of the US and call on all the delegations to boycott such practice.

For some time now, some politicians in the US have been making ferocious attacks against the CPC, in an attempt to
sever the strong bond between the CPC and the Chinese people, and estrange China, under the CPC's leadership, from the rest of the world. Their purpose is to destabilize China, and provoke confrontation of ideology and social system. I don't know who gave them such a lousy idea. Anyone who understands China, and understands history, would know that the relationship between the CPC and the Chinese people is as close as between “fish and water”. Under the CPC's leadership, China values principles, reason and credibility. China is not one of those two superpowers of the Cold War, and has no intention of becoming another United States. It is the US who is seeking hegemony throughout the world, and who is bullying other countries. It is the US who is trying to sow divisions among countries, and who is making waves through militarization in the South China Sea. China is not that country. China is always a firm defender of the international order and the international system. We will continue to adhere to the path of peaceful development, and will never seek hegemony or expansionism. We will always be a staunch force for peace. Those US politicians will never get their way in the face of firm rejection from the Chinese people and the international community.

The US ambassador’s vicious attacks against the CPC are not related to the work of the CD. What I'm now going to say, however, is closely related to the CD and international arms control process. The American move is rooted in a Cold War mentality, a desire to bring the world back to the era of Cold War, and to drag major countries into renewed conflict and confrontation and to plunge the world into chaos and division again. I’d like to state to the US, that the Cold War only belongs to the past century. With their attempts to provoke a “new Cold War”, certain Americans
contravenes the fundamental interests of the people of the world and the global trend of development and progress. In the 21st century, such move has no support of the people, and is doomed to fail.

I must point out in particular that this Cold War mentality is the biggest obstacle and the worst enemy to strategic security and international arms control in the new era. Does the US, by sticking to the Cold War mentality, and treating others as adversaries, by willfully getting itself out from constraints of international treaties and starting an unrestrained build-up of its own strategic arms, really believe that it can get its way with arms control deals that serve only its own security interest and diminish other, and that free itself and regulate others? At the time when it is busy getting itself out from the constraints of existing arms control treaties, the US is fastidiously trying to drag others into arms control talks. It has even come up with an absurd idea called “distrust and verify”. Is this a suggestion for arms control talks between adversaries and enemies, or between partners? Is the US ready to address the legitimate security concerns of others, and make fair, and mutually beneficial compromises for the sake of common security? Without trust, where comes arms control?!

I’d also like to remind the US ambassador that there are just two countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals, not three. As for the US allegation that China expands its nuclear arsenal, that is news even to me! I wonder from where you get that information? And what are the facts to back up the allegation? China welcomes the continued bilateral arms control talks between the US and Russia, and calls on the US to respond to the Russian proposal on extending the New START Treaty, and on keeping the commitment to drastically reducing their nuclear arsenals,
thus creating conditions for multilateral process of nuclear arms control.

Mr. President,

In spite of the impact of the COVID-19 and the political virus on the world and multilateral process, including on the CD which has not been able to embark on its work, there's still overwhelming call for multilateralism, and strong support for international solidarity and cooperation. The CD meetings, which we had before the COVID-19, on the 30th June and today indeed, are well attended by the vast majority of CD members. This is a convincing proof. We sincerely hope that the CD will make the best use of the remaining time for this year to have consideration and debate of international security situation and the multilateral arms control process, so as to pave the way for the successful adoption of a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work and arrangement next year. The report of the CD should also reflect this in an objective way.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. At a time when the future of the world is at stake, China will continue to champion and pursue multilateralism, safeguard the UN-centered international system, and promote multipolarity and greater democracy in international relations. Because of the local COVID-19 situation, there are still a lot of uncertainties surrounding the modality of the work of the First Committee of UNGA. We still hope that all member states will continue to have thorough, profound, frank and practical discussions on the international situation and the multilateral arms control process, leading to resolutions on important issues of common concern in this field, and making further progress
of multilateral arms control in the framework of the United Nations.

We are also looking forward to the convening of the Tenth Review Conference of the NPT next January. Frankly speaking, because of the COVID-19, the final preparation phase is still facing lots of uncertainties. But this is going to be a milestone conference, carrying on the past and forging toward the future. And it will be of great significance to consolidating and strengthening international non-proliferation regime. China, as an NPT nuclear weapon State, is committed to the obligations and undertakings under the treaty. We will make our own contributions to the success of the RevCon. That includes further promoting the P5 dialogue and cooperation mechanism. I’m ready to work with other P5 colleagues to resume our institutional consultations. This will enable us to prepare for the RevCon of the NPT, and also allow us to have exchanges and discussions on issues such as global strategic stability, strengthening strategic trust, nuclear policies and doctrines, strategic risk reduction, etc. We also hope to turn this into a standing mechanism in the future. The stable functioning of the P5 mechanism will be of great significance to major power relations, international arms control process and the full implementation of NPT obligations.

China is engaged in bilateral talks with the P5 partners on strategic security and arms control issues. Because of US actions, China-US relations are facing unprecedented difficulties and challenges. We have been making cool-headed and sensible response to the impulsive moves and anxiety of the US. We are always ready to develop a China-US relationship featuring no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation based on coordination, cooperation and stability. In the meantime, as
a sovereign state, we will firmly defend our sovereignty, security and development interests. We are ready to enter into candid, effective consultation with the US, and on the basis of equality, mutual respect and mutual trust, we hope to have a common understanding with the US to resume the dialogue on strategic stability and arms control.

Mr. President,

Next week we will participate, as a State Party for the first time, in the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We will have in-depth discussions with other States Parties on strengthening the Treaty mechanism, promoting ATT’s effectiveness and universality, and improving its synergy with other international mechanisms. We will also take an active part in the Meetings of Experts of the Biological Weapons Convention planned in early December. We're looking forward to discussing with other States Parties on how to further strengthen national capacity building and promote international cooperation for biological security in the background of COVID-19, and on strengthening the BWC regime, especially by continuing to strive for the negotiation and conclusion of its verification protocol.

As I stated at the first plenary meeting of the CD this January, no matter how grave the situation is and how much challenge we face, China will remain optimistic and confident. With a responsible and constructive attitude, China will deliver positive energy to the multilateral forums and make fresh efforts to push forward the international arms control and non-proliferation process with practical actions. We've been doing so in the past, and will continue to do so in the future.

Thank you, Mr. President.