



Permanent Representation  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva

**Statement**  
**by the Permanent Representative of Germany**  
**to the Conference on Disarmament,**  
**Ambassador Peter Beerwerth,**  
**during the opening session of the 2021 CD season**  
**on 19 January 2021**

Mr. President,

it is a pleasure for me to congratulate you on the assumption of this important office and reassure you of my delegation's full and constructive support.

2020 and 2021 will likely make history as the years when life as we knew it paused to a large extent due to a pandemic that has been testing the patience and resolve of our societies in unprecedented ways. While exposing the fragility of life, it also unveiled some of the best aspects of human nature, including our ability to flexibly adapt to new challenges, to cooperate in multilateral contexts and to find innovative and creative solutions to new problems.

We should use this positive spirit and dynamism also in this august body. Although its inherent difficulties, impasses and antagonisms are not exactly new, a return to pragmatism and positive thinking is always possible and it is never too late for a new start.

Mr. President,

Peace and security are one of the main drivers for international cooperation and the very reason for us being here. The challenges and perspectives for the year 2021 are manifold and I just want to name a few of them:

- The NPT RevCon, critical for the future success nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime
- The future of New START, the last remaining nuclear arms control instrument
- The need to protect the integrity of international law against ongoing effort to undermine it, e.g. through the use or threat of use of WMD as chemical weapons as means to project and exert power
- Risk of flaring up of regional tensions and conflicts
- The nuclear proliferation concerns as to North Korea and Iran
- The modernization of nuclear arsenals by almost all nuclear powers
- Development and weaponization of new and revolutionary technologies as AI and QC
- Outer space as a new potential domain for conflict
- Destabilizing developments in the cyber space

All of these issues relate in one way or another to our agenda in the CD. So let us use the scarce time effectively to make things happen and not block the ample goodwill that exists in this chamber.

Mr. President,

as time is precious I will dive right into the heart of the matter – how this body plans to organize its work in 2021.

The good thing is that we neither have to re-invent the wheel nor to abandon principled national positions to do so. Generations of dedicated and committed diplomats have staked out ways how to overcome the impasse that has been plaguing this institution for too long and to narrow down respective differences. Almost all stones have been turned in efforts to sketch out procedural alleys which pay due respect to the mandate and the rules of procedure of the CD. It nowadays takes a pundit to dig into the full history of all those exercises.

We thus heard with great relief that your Presidency, in close collaboration with the following 5 Presidencies of this season, has chosen a common sense approach to bring this body back to work, avoiding any red lines and building on consensual elements of the past. And with work I do not mean endless debates about lofty goals or vague procedural questions but concrete work on the core items on our agenda. The package you are proposing to overcome the deadlock – and we are grateful that you circulated it so early in time - is far from being ideal in our eyes but it is clearly a way to engage constructively on the issues that are so pertinent to global peace and security. As our foreign minister [declared](#) it at the January 6-th meeting of the countries supporting the Stockholm Initiative: “If we seize the opportunity and make full use of the perspectives 2021 offer we can put diplomacy back on track towards a world without nuclear weapons. 2021 can be a watershed year for nuclear disarmament.”

Thank you Mr. President!