

**REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN**

Paix – Travail – Patrie

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**MINISTERE DES RELATIONS EXTERIEURES**

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DIRECTION DES NATIONS UNIES ET DE  
LA COOPERATION DECENTRALISEE



**REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

Peace – Work – Fatherland

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**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
AND DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION

# JOINT DECLARATION OF THE COUNTRIES OF P. 06 DELIVERED BY H.E. THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC CAMEROON

## AS PART OF

## THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 2021 SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

War is a singular human endeavour. No other species on this planet organizes itself and its society as systematically for the possible conduct of war, has engaged in war for years at a time, nor has any other species done as much harm to itself, to other species, and to the environment in its prosecution of war as humans. Yet, if States seem at times too ready to descend into war, there have always been individuals and States that counselled a different path and who have championed institutions and processes to maintain peace and settle our differences without resort to State violence.

The perils of war were searingly demonstrated in the first 50 years of the 20th century when two world wars killed an estimated 95 million people and saw the use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. It is little wonder that after each of these wars the survivors sought alternate means of resolving international tensions and disagreements short of war. After the First World War, it was hoped that the League of Nations would, in part, “achieve international peace and security”. While this effort failed, the devastation of the Second World War led to a second such effort resulting in the creation of the United Nations which in Article One of its Charter sought “to maintain international peace and security.” This second effort is a work in progress, but our countries are pleased that it continues, and we continue to support this laudable purpose.

**Mr. President,**

Since the Charters signing, a range of international institutions and gatherings have taken place to help ensure and protect international peace and security by addressing a range of complex issues from peacekeeping, arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament. It is the latter effort that our six

countries are preoccupied with this year as we serve as the 2021 Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference has its accomplishments, notably the negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but for an organization that dates back over 40 years it cannot be counted an unparalleled success given its inaction over the last two decades. In fairness, the Conference on Disarmament is not an outlier in terms of limited effectiveness in recent years. The entirety of the Disarmament Machinery faces challenges with the UN Disarmament Commission achieving little of consequence. We collectively believe that there is merit in re-examining the purposes of the Disarmament Machinery and determining if it can be revamped, or needs to be completely overhauled.

While the functioning of the Disarmament Machinery leaves much to be desired, we nonetheless reaffirm its importance. Indeed, if it did not exist, we would be arguing that it was a necessity. Tensions between States are at a post Cold War high and mutual mistrust and suspicion are the rule rather than the exception. New weapons, nuclear weapons modernization, AI, cyber and emerging technologies all have potential to destabilize an already charged environment with consequences that could be catastrophic for all countries regardless of geographic location or state of development. This reality profoundly worries our governments and our peoples. And these concerns cannot be solved solely on a bilateral basis or regional basis. Some have consequences for all states and require solutions through multilateral diplomacy.

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

In 2021, our six countries helm the Conference on Disarmament. We have been working together for about half a year to prepare for this moment. We have examined the range of issues already on the Conference's agenda and the overall state of play on those issues. We have sought to offer a work program which would allow substantive discussion on all items and

produce a summary of the main areas of agreement, and division, to help pave the path for eventual negotiations. We are under no illusions on how much we can achieve in a 24-week session, but we have tried to impart some new momentum to the work of the Conference.

To achieve that momentum, however, depends on all Conference members. It requires flexibility, and some compromise, from all parties. In this context, the principle of consensus in our work is an important one, and we appreciate its necessity when delegations are engaged in actual negotiations on a legally-binding instrument. Indeed, we cannot imagine negotiations on a legal instrument within the Conference without the safeguard of consensus to protect the interests of each State. However, when our discussions are of a general nature and of limited scope, and quite removed from a treaty negotiation, then we encourage greater forbearance and tolerance from all delegations, whether the issue is nuclear disarmament, or aspects thereof, or prevention of an arms race in outer space. Absolutist positions and minimal flexibility are exactly the opposite of what the Conference, or the cause of multilateral disarmament, need at this juncture.

The work of the Conference on Disarmament, and the overall Disarmament Machinery, exists on a spectrum between the perceived global good of adopting new universal disarmament measures and each State's right to security, as it perceives it. We contend that there is ample space between these two poles to pursue meaningful work in the Conference. This year it is our task, as Presidents of the Conference, to propose means by which we might together find that middle space and that is what our delegations have sought to do with the package proposal. Beyond that, it is up to each Conference member to determine how it will contribute to the success of this work. That would include seeking to reduce the mistrust and misunderstanding among Conference members and rebuilding confidence. This is not a task of a single year. What we can do in 2021, however, is return to an atmosphere of constructive discussion around the agenda items and by so doing lay a coherent foundation for a return to active negotiations in the

Conference on issues that matter to all our countries, and where a consensus agreement or understanding would substantially improve peace and security for all States. That would be a singular achievement of which to be proud.

Thank you.