

(Mr. Hou, China)

... The Chinese delegation is of the view that the expansion of the membership of the CD is an important, sensitive and complex issue. Its solution is a process of evolution. It cannot be dealt with in a totally perfect and instantaneous manner. We think that the proposal put forward by Ambassador O'Sullivan is a positive compromise in this process of evolution. The Chinese delegation has always actively participated in the consultations and has made its own contributions. We originally intended to join the consensus on this proposal, and we are ready to welcome the new members. It is regrettable that we failed to achieve a consensus today. We understand the sense of disappointment expressed by many delegations of members and non-members. We sympathize with their sentiments. At the same time, we also agree with their views that we must continue to strive. The Chinese delegation would like to stress that the CD is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The CD must be further strengthened and expanded on an appropriate basis, particularly at present, when the CD faces new challenges and new opportunities. The CD finds itself at a very important stage. It faces the problem of a solution of NSA, TIA and very soon it must initiate a negotiation on CTBT. Under these circumstances, it requires more than ever the broad participation of the international community. Broad representation is very important. This will contribute to the further improvement of the efficiency of the CD and the strengthening of its role. For this reason, the Chinese delegation hopes that all parties will continue to make an effort and show the necessary spirit of compromise and cooperation, speed up consultations and bring about a proper solution to the membership issue as soon as possible, so that the world community will not be disappointed. The Chinese delegation would like to pledge that, as always, it will continue to participate in the consultation and work for the early achievement of a consensus on this matter, so that we can welcome the new members as soon as possible and work together with them to meet the new challenges and opportunities.