



Introductory Remarks

**Working Group on the “way ahead”: Agenda item 1 and 2 –
Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and
Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, with a
general focus on the ban of the production of fissile materials for
nuclear weapons and other explosive devices**

Excellencies,
dear colleagues,

In pursuance of the mandate received by the States Members of the Conference on Disarmament with adoption of decision CD/2090 on the establishment of a Working Group on the “way ahead”, the Chair of the Working Group, H.E. Ambassador Htin Lynn, has scheduled meetings on Agenda item 1 and 2 – Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, with a general focus on the ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices - on 20 June p.m. – 22 and 23 June a.m.

It is a great honour for me to have been asked by the chair of the Working Group to co-facilitate, acting as Friend of the Chair, these meetings.

You will have received my letter of 12 June 2017 proposing a structure for this discussion, in order to make best use of the time available and in order to allow for a substantive debate.

Let me at the outset briefly set the stage for our discussion and recapitulate the most important milestones on our way to a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)

Indeed the first suggestion for a concept of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty was already made in 1946 by the American Baruch Plan, when Bernard Baruch, US representative to the United Nations Atomic Energy commission, submitted a proposal for the international control of atomic energy. Subsequently the “Atoms for Peace” speech delivered by US President

Dwight Eisenhower before the United Nations in 1953, further called for the elimination of fissile materials and a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear devices.

Throughout the 1960s, a ban on the production of fissile materials for military purposes was included in discussions covering the larger realm of nonproliferation and arms control measures. In June 1964, the United States submitted a working paper to the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament that discussed “the inspection of nuclear powers under a cutoff of fissionable material for use in weapons.”

In 1978, the UN General Assembly adopted a final document after its first Special Session on Disarmament, which contained a program of action on disarmament. It noted that nuclear disarmament would require “urgent negotiations of agreements at appropriate stages and with adequate measures of verification satisfactory to the States concerned for: ... cessation of ... the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes.”

Again in September 1993 this issue was addressed by US President Bill Clinton in an official address to the United Nations General Assembly. Considering the danger of nuclear terrorism, President Clinton called for an international agreement to halt the production of fissile material which can be used in nuclear weapons. Shortly after that statement, the General Assembly passed Resolution 48/75L entitled “Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices”. This resolution calls for the negotiation of a “non-discriminatory multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”. It mandated the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material where discussions began in 1994.

Ambassador Gerald Shannon of Canada was appointed by the CD as Special Coordinator to determine the views of CD members on the prospective scope of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty. Initial debates during the Shannon discussions were primarily centered on the inclusion of rules that would cover existing stockpiles and future production of fissile material. On 24 March 1995, Shannon produced CD Document 1299 (CD/1299), also referred to as the Shannon Mandate which was adopted by consensus. The objectives of the mandate called for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee within the CD to negotiate an FMCT and the negotiation of a treaty that in the words of resolution 48/75L would be “non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable”. However, the Ad Hoc Committee, due to a lack of consensus in the CD was not able to take up its work.

In August 1998 the CD formally established (based on CD/1547) an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a treaty in accordance with the Shannon Mandate. This breakthrough was short-lived as the Ad Hoc

Committee did not reconvene during the 1999 session, again due to a lack of consensus on the CD's annual programme of work.

In May 2006 the United States proposed a draft treaty together with a draft mandate (CD/1776 and CD/1777).

However, further progress in the CD under the Shannon Mandate during the following years did not come about. In May 2009 the CD adopted as CD/1864 a draft programme of work including FMCT. Unfortunately, CD/1864 proved as short-lived as CD/1574 and the CD's record of having no Programme of Work since 1996 continues to this day.

In parallel, in 2000 States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons called for the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations at the CD, "taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives" as part of its 13 practical steps, a request that was repeated by the point 22 of the action plan, which was adopted by the 2010 Review Conference on the NPT.

In 2012, the UN General Assembly passed resolution 67/53, calling for the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.

The GGE, which met in 4 sessions of 2 weeks each in 2014/15 led to the adoption of a report which constitutes the most detailed document on the substance of an FMCT so far. In parallel, 2015 France presented a draft treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (CD/2020) in April 2015, which gave further impetus towards commencing productive discussions.

In 2016 the General Assembly in Resolution 71/259 asked the Secretary-General to establish a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group to consider and make recommendation on substantial elements of a future non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. The Secretary-General has been called upon to transmit the report of this group to the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament prior to its 2019 session.

I propose notably that we build our deliberations on these elements including the discussions that have recently taken place at the Conference on Disarmament, notably in 2014 and 2015 in the framework of the schedule of activities. The reports on these meetings (CD/1995 and CD/2043/Rev.1) that had been drafted by the coordinators of these meetings in their personal capacity have been circulated.

You will recall that in previous discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue there was general agreement, that the questions of scope, definitions, verification and legal and institutional arrangements of a ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices were considered as relevant elements. I, therefore, propose, as contained in my letter of 12 June to begin today's discussions with the a general exchange of views and an in-depth discussion of the scope a ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.