



AUSTRALIA



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UNITED NATIONS

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Open-ended informal consultative meeting on “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”

**Statement by Dr Robert Floyd
Director-General, Australian Safeguards & Non-proliferation
Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Chair, distinguished colleagues, I wish to take this opportunity to make some brief high-level comments.

It is encouraging that there is universal support amongst states for a world free of nuclear weapons. At whatever time this may become possible, and through whatever legal instrument this may be achievable, one practical and essential element will be a verifiable ban on the production of the fissile material required for such weapons.

Some kind of fissile material cut-off treaty will be required to achieve ultimate disarmament. This goal is a noble cause worth

striving for, a legacy worth leaving for our children and the generations to come.

We strongly support the establishment of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty as it can put a real-world limit on the potential for any nuclear weapons build-up. Such a treaty is essential to constraining nuclear arms races, preventing non-nuclear weapon states from developing a nuclear weapons capability, and supporting the aims and objectives of the NPT in progressing nuclear disarmament.

Although the concept of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) attracts near universal support, the negotiation of such an instrument has evaded us. If it were simple to do, I am convinced it would have been done by those who have gone before us. However, even though it has been difficult, we must rise to the challenge for the good of all.

Chair, I am delighted that you have risen to the challenge and accepted the role of chair of the FMCT Preparatory Group. Your depth of knowledge and your skill befit you for this task and my delegation wishes you every success and we commit our support to you in this role as we participate in the Preparatory Group.

We wish to acknowledge and express our appreciation for Canada's unstinting commitment to an FMCT, a commitment that

extends for more than 2 decades. We also wish to acknowledge the important role of The Netherlands and Germany as co-sponsors of the resolution to establish the FMCT Preparatory Group.

This open-ended consultation with all interested states provides important input to the work of the Preparatory Group as it allows all states to present their views. I look forward to further input from any interested state as the Preparatory Group proceeds with its work.

Chair and distinguished colleagues, as we consider the important and sometimes challenging technical detail that might fit together in a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and how such a treaty might work, may it never be that through a lack of imagination, commitment and the necessary flexibility, we fail to make progress on this, a most noble cause.

Thank you