



EU statement

Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty

Conference on Disarmament

Geneva, 12 February 2019

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I would like to welcome Ambassador Heidi Hulan to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and thank her for presenting to us the report of the High Level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group. The EU commends Canada for its continued leadership on this issue and Ambassador Hulan for her skilful stewardship that resulted in a strong consensual outcome.

The EU and its Member States reiterate their longstanding support for an immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of 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.

Starting such negotiations is not only an EU priority, but the overwhelming will of the international community, as manifested in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan and reiterated by UN General Assembly Resolution 73/65, which reaffirmed the urgent necessity of negotiating and bringing to a conclusion a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We thus fully support the unanimous recommendation of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group to begin FMCT negotiations in the CD without delay, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. Let us be clear: the start of FMCT negotiations will not threaten anyone's national security interests. Any State who has reservations about aspects of a future Treaty can raise them during negotiations in the CD, which operates through the consensus rule. Once again, we call on all CD members to exert their utmost flexibility in this respect. In the meantime, we call on those nuclear weapon States who have not yet done so and all other States possessing nuclear weapons to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

We welcome the comprehensive preparatory work carried out in the High Level Expert Preparatory Group and the previous Group of Governmental Experts with a view to elaborating elements for a future treaty. The High Level Group made substantial progress on possible definitions, scope, verification, and legal and institutional arrangements. The options-based approach allowed for an in-depth consideration of every possible alternative, increasing understanding of the challenges at stake and providing a clearer picture to future negotiators on options which are realistic. Options for a treaty's preambular elements may include reference to, inter alia, the importance of active and equal participation and leadership of women and their full involvement in the institutions of the treaty and in its efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. We also welcome the identification of substantial transparency and confidence-building measures.

We recall that last year's General Assembly Resolution on FMCT, co-sponsored by Canada, Germany and the Netherlands, was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 182 States in favour, 5 abstentions and 1 against. This resolution urged UN Member States to give due consideration to the report of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group, including further consideration of confidence building measures, and called on the CD to fully examine the report and consider further action.

Positive momentum has already been created in the CD under the leadership of Germany facilitating the discussions in the Way Ahead Working Group on FMCT, amongst others, and the Netherlands, who coordinated the work in Subsidiary Body 2. The in-depth technical discussions in Subsidiary Body 2 last year and its consensual report showed converging views on several issues and signaled that there is a collective will to look for commonalities. We should build on this work and establish a new subsidiary body or a working group for the 2019 CD session leading to FMCT negotiations. In this respect, we agree with the recommendation of the High Level Group that further expert work could be useful in particular on the various verification models to determine how they might work in practice, and the resource implications of the possible verification and institutional models.

Mr. President,

As we approach the 2020 NPT Review Conference, it is of utmost importance that the CD moves swiftly towards FMCT negotiations. We remain convinced that FMCT is the next logical step on nuclear disarmament and would make a significant practical contribution to both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. Such a treaty is needed more than ever to encourage further progress also on other arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues. At a time when there is a real prospect of weapon numbers increasing, the logic for a treaty stopping the production of the material from which they are made is even clearer.

In order to sustain the momentum, the EU provides financial support to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to facilitate the participation of African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries in FMCT related consultations and other activities.

The main objectives of the projects are to promote dialogue at regional level, enhance knowledge and understanding on the FMCT substance and process, and broaden and strengthen the participation of all States in future negotiations on FMCT. Four regional workshops have already taken place for the Caribbean, Asian, the Pacific, and Central and West African countries. Further regional workshops will follow for countries in Latin America and South and East Africa, in addition to expert meetings and country visits.

Thank you, Mr. President