

**Statement by Mr. François Rivasseau, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament
In plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament
About agenda items 1 and 2: future measures**

Geneva, March 2nd 2006

Mr. President,

I share the feeling of those who underscored the usefulness of your focused debates this week. We are here to talk about the future measures to be negotiated in relation to the agenda items 1 and 2.

Mr. President,

a) During the last NPT Review Conference in 2005 in New York, the EU member states adopted a common position, that binds us, and that, on the “cut-off” issue, states, and I quote: “call again for the immediate commencement of negotiations as well as an early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, without pre-conditions, and bearing in mind the special co-ordinator’s report and the mandate contained therein, pending entry into force of such a treaty, and calls on all states to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” (end of quote). After the NPT review conference, this call keeps all its value and France along with its 24 partners has to keep it alive.

b) For the concrete implementation of our commitments, we act “taking into account the decisions and the resolutions adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference” as the 7th Review Conference decided. I briefly recall the content of this program of action regarding nuclear disarmament:

- conclusion of the CTBT
- Negotiation of the FMCT

- Willingness to systematically and gradually move forward in order to reduce nuclear weapons globally and to act towards general and complete disarmament.

c) The Fissile Material Cut-off Treat (FMCT) therefore has a specific place in the nuclear disarmament process. That is why we have supported, at the first commission of the UN General Assembly, all resolutions relevant to that matter: in 2004, the resolution 59/81 introduced by Canada and in 2005, the resolution entitled: "a path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons" introduced by Japan.

Mr. President,

France has been continuously committed to the negotiation of such a treaty at the CD. In his speech of January 19th, our President recalled the importance that France attaches to the FMCT.

After having announced the end of the production of highly-enriched plutonium and uranium for nuclear weapons, France took the decision, in February 1996, to close and dismantle its production facilities in Pierrelate and Marcoule. Since then, my country has been involved in a dismantling process that is still going on today. That is a complex, long and costly task, that will be carried on for several years. My country is the only one, among nuclear powers, to have undertaken such a process. France no longer has any production facilities of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

After having been in a stalemate for a long time, the "cut-off" negotiation today has a chance to be restarted. In this respect, we welcome with pleasure the possibility that is offered to us this year to prepare this negotiation in the framework of the timetable of activities that has just been adopted. We hope that delegations will actively participate in the debates on this issue.

Mr. President,

Our general approach on a future FMCT revolves around the following ideas:

- As we said within this body, the scope of application concerns the total banning of future production of fissile materials for nuclear bombs. It is obvious that this treaty, unless we dramatically change

its nature, concern neither the stocks constituted before the entry into force of the treaty, nor the production for peaceful purposes or non-explosive military uses. The purpose of the treaty is to quantitatively freeze the maximum level of nuclear arsenals in the world, as the CTBT qualitatively froze it. There is indeed a strong link between the FMCT and the CTBT and our future negotiation will have to take it into consideration.

- Concerning verification, we still accept the special coordinator's report, and the mandate contained therein, which mentions "verifiability". We assign to this word its French meaning, that is to say "likely to be verified". We also subscribe to the argument that no verification measure can provide perfect assurances regarding the respect of the treaty. We think that no pre-condition to the beginning of negotiations should be established. The debate on verification will be solved during the negotiation itself.

Finally, the other aspects of this Treaty will have in our eyes to be examined in detail in the course of the negotiation.

Mr. President,

We welcome the opportunity that will be offered to us under the Romanian Presidency to focus our debates on this issue, in order to build confidence among ourselves.

Mr. President, thank you./.