

**STATEMENT OF HIS EXC. MR. FRANÇOIS RIVASSEAU,
AMBASSADOR,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

IN PLENARY SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Nuclear Disarmament

Geneva, 23 June 2005

Mr Chairman,

Last week you invited us to express us on the most important issues for our work programme. After the new issues of last Thursday, I am replying to your invitation to make our opinions known on nuclear disarmament.

Mr Chairman,

First of all I must recall that the French approach is in the line with the common position we had approved within the European Union in sight of the Review Conference of NPT. This document, which binds our 25 States, had been presented at this place by the presidency two weeks ago, and from now on constitutes an official document of the Conference. I will not repeat in details all pertinent elements. I would simply emphasise we consider, as our other partners, that the resumption of the Conference's base work is particularly important in view of negotiations about a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for the nuclear weapons. Besides, we will more specifically going back on that issue next week.

Mr Chairman,

At the Seventh Review Conference, the European Union emphasised the necessity to preserve NPT integrity, to reinforce its implementation, to work in favour of its universalization and detailed more precisely a number of important considerations for our work here. In the line of this approach, France has reaffirmed on the occasion of this Review Conference its commitments of nuclear disarmament, within the framework of its general and complete commitments of disarmament. My country has proved that it respects, in good faith, its commitments in accordance with article VI.

In concrete implementation of its commitments, France is notably guided by the Action Programme we decided during indefinite prorogation of NPT in 1995. I remind you about this programme holding in three points:

- The conclusion of the CTBT;
- The negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT);
- The will to go systematically and gradually forward, in order to reduce the nuclear weapons as a whole and to work for general and complete disarmament.

Mr Chairman,

France has given up to conduct nuclear tests and has adhered to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

- Before the entry into force of the Treaty, France had drawn all consequences by dismantling the testing facilities in the Pacific. Among the nuclear powers, my country is the only one to have made it. Today, France does not have any more facilities enabling it to carry out nuclear explosions. In addition, France strongly supports the preliminary works for the promulgation of CTBT. France is concretely getting involved in the setting up of its verification regime.

- However France deeply notices and regrets that CTBT is still not came into force.

Moreover we will have the opportunity to speak more specifically about the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and the negative guarantees of security.

Mr Chairman,

France has contributed as strongly as possible to reduce the nuclear weapons as a whole.

- Firstly, France is sticking and stuck always to logic of strict sufficiency for its nuclear strike capacity, essential foundation of its security.

- Secondly, since 1985 France has reduced the number of its means of delivery by two thirds. The booklet "Fighting Proliferation, Promoting Arms Control and Disarmament: France's Contribution" which illustrates this matter is at the disposal of the delegations and the public wishing to go further into this matter.

- France supports the continuation of the efforts of nuclear arsenals' global reduction. Today they are marked in a priority way by the process undertaken by the United States and Russia, which have a number of nuclear weapons without common measure with the number of other equipped States.

- In addition, France takes part in concrete actions outside its borders. France particularly has the intention to bring a technical and financial contribution to the programme to eliminate Russian weapons-grade plutonium in Russia designated as surplus to defence requirements, within the framework of the agreement being negotiated within the Multilateral Plutonium Destruction Group (MPDG).

Mr Chairman,

During these two last decades, several non-nuclear States Parties, have violated their obligations, have developed clandestine nuclear programmes, and have made untruthful statements at the Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000. Their actions and those of the networks which helped them, would have been continued without the recent revelations and our common will of reinforcing the regime of nuclear non-proliferation.

All the more, France is determined to go on with the application of all NPT measures. Today, the proliferation's crisis constitutes the main challenge for the international security. In this view we encourage the DC to play its entire role in general and complete disarmament, including in its nuclear part. My country is totally conscious of its nuclear-weapons State responsibility and of its commitments in accordance with article VI. France has taken its commitments within this framework and implemented them. For the future, France reaffirms its will of continuing to contribute to nuclear disarmament and also to general and complete disarmament.

Mr Chairman,

At the Seventh Review Conference of NPT, we decided that the review process of the Treaty, for which the Disarmament Conference has to bring its entire contribution, will have to go "in the light of the decisions and the resolution of the previous Review Conferences". In this mind, it has to be observed that our Conference has duty, yesterday like today, to discuss about nuclear disarmament in order to identify ripe topics for a negotiation. This identification's work is mainly already made because a topic, the "cut-off" one, is identified as priority for ten years now, especially since the decision Number 2 of 1995. But the FMCT does not use up the general duty of discussion and consideration of our Conference. Our today's debate testifies for instance it.

Always in this mind, Mr Chairman, we have carefully noticed the ideas of the Dutch presidency on the issue of nuclear disarmament and FMCT. We also have carefully noticed the reading given by the New Zealand presidency. We think it is in the general interest to go further into the discussion to clarify, in good faith, these essential points in order to facilitate an overall agreement for a work programme.

In the line of the European common position that we approved at the Seventh Conference, France is ready to contribute constructively to this work.

Mr Chairman,

I thank you.