

**STATEMENT OF MR. JEAN-MICHEL DESPAX,
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

IN PLENARY SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

- Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty -

Geneva, 28 June 2005

Mr Chairman,

1/ At the time of the recent Review Conference of the NPT last May in New York, the Members States of the European Union adopted a common position declaring on the issue of the "cut-off" and I quote: "It revives a call to the Disarmament Conference in order to start immediately and conclude as soon as possible a non-discriminatory and universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, without preconditions and keeping in mind the report of the special co-ordinator and included mandate while waiting for the entry into force of the aforesaid treaty. It (the common position) invites all the States to declare and maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices." (end of translated quotation).

In the aftermath of the NPT, this call keeps all its relevance. France and its 24 partners have to make it alive.

2/ In the concrete implementation of our commitments, we are also acting according to the action programme decided at the time of the indefinite extension of NPT in 1995 which is also keeping its pertinence as decided the Seventh Conference. I briefly recall its nuclear disarmament aspects:

- Conclusion of the CTBT;
- Negotiation of the 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.

Regarding the Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT), France has constantly been engaged in favour of the negotiation of a Treaty within the Disarmament Conference.

After having been in an impasse for a long time, this negotiation has today real chances to be reopened. In this context, we call the States which are authentically interested by concrete progresses of Arms and disarmament's control to show senses of responsibilities.

3/ After having announced the cessation of plutonium and uranium's production highly enriched for the nuclear weapons, France took the decision in February 1996 to close and to dismantle its facilities for the production at Pierrelatte and Marcoule. Since this decision, my country is actively engaged in this process of dismantling, which is continuing today. It is a complex, long and intense task which will be prolonged over several years. Among the nuclear powers, my country is the only one to have undertaken this task. From now on France does not have any more facilities for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

4/ As I already announced in this forum, France conducted a national review of the "cut-off" issue during the year 2004. According to this review, we reaffirmed our interest in FMCT negotiation at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva. As in 1995, the FMCT remains today one of the two particularly current elements of the nuclear disarmament's process at a multilateral level, the other being the CTBT. I recall that France voted in favour of the "cut-off" resolution at the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations.

On the one hand, it has to be recognised that the interest in term of non-proliferation of the "cut-off" is less important since the adoption of safeguards 93+2 and the appearance of the additional protocols as standard of the verification, in particular in the NWS. On the other hand, the "cut-off" remains relevant in its dimension of nuclear disarmament, to which my country is remaining attached. We are faithful to our commitments.

5/ Finally, if we endeavour to express to the Disarmament Conference, in operational terms, the priority which we attach to start the negotiation, my delegation estimates that the most recent formulation contained in paper "Food for Thought" proposed by the Ambassador Chris Sanders has to be developed a little more. The idea to start the negotiation without preconditions, evoked by some of the most ardent defenders of the "cut-off" in this forum, seems promising to us.

Mr Chairman,

I thank you.