Thank you Mme Chair,

I take the floor at this time with respect to draft resolution L.23, "Prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

Canada’s decision to introduce this resolution was based on the important developments on this file over the course of the past year. Most importantly, this year the CD engaged in structured, focussed debates on all of its agenda items. This was cause for optimism that the CD is closer to opening negotiations on an FMCT than it has been for some time.

Given the importance of the subject, we felt that it would be appropriate for the First Committee to make a contribution as well. In support of this, Canada decided to put forward draft resolution L.23, which calls for the immediate start of negotiations on such a treaty in the CD. This draft resolution seeks to capitalize on the momentum that we have seen this year at the CD, and to send a signal from the international community that we want the CD to take the next step. It was also drafted with the goal of restoring a consensus within the First Committee around this issue.

By design, L.23 sticks closely to these objectives. It does not attempt to predict the outcome of negotiations, nor does it look to establish parameters for starting them. The draft also does not attempt to prejudge what other tasks the CD may choose to take up. These elements, in our view, are not necessary for its purposes.

During the consultations that we have held on this draft resolution, however, it has become clear that not all delegations are convinced that this minimalist approach to the resolution is the right way forward. While no delegation has opposed the idea of starting negotiations, there remains a divergence of views as to the conditions under which those negotiations should start. We have come to the conclusion that in the time available to us, it will not be possible to reconcile the different points of view.

In the absence of our hoped-for consensus, we then must ask ourselves whether the resolution would provide an appropriate signal to the CD of the desire of the international community to get negotiations started. Our conclusion here is that it would not. For this reason, Canada has decided to withdraw draft resolution L.23. We hope that those who have expressed support for this draft will understand this decision.

Canada will do its part to ensure that the CD returns to fruitful and productive work in 2007, including the beginning of negotiations on an FMCT, and encourages all states represented here to support this goal.

Thank you Mme Chair.