



**CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

**STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 1**

**H.E. AMBASSADOR MARY WHELAN**

**IRELAND**

**23 JUNE 2005**

Mr. President,

I wish to thank the Norwegian President of the Conference for his proposal to allocate specific time for delegations to make statements about issues relevant to security and disarmament. This affords all delegations a means of sharing views on issues which reflect their respective priorities. The Conference of Disarmament was established as a single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. The process of negotiation has many aspects. Before negotiations can begin, consensus has to be developed. To build consensus, discussion is essential. Yet here at the Conference, there is a reticence to engage in the type of discussions which could facilitate the development of consensus on many aspects of the agenda. Along with the discord which marked the seventh NPT Review Conference last May, our collective failure to adopt a programme of work at the CD casts a long shadow on the prospects for effectively discharging our mandate.

Ireland continues to regard the Conference on Disarmament as having the potential to serve as an important tool in maintaining international peace and security. We remain convinced that multilateral cooperation is in the interest of all. We have placed our faith in the multilateral regime of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. We are committed to implementing and strengthening these instruments and to pursuing the universalisation of their norms. We believe that the validity of this collective rules-based approach persists notwithstanding the new security permutations which have emerged since the end of the "cold war". We are not adverse to approaches which are innovative or otherwise take new challenges into consideration. But we are not attracted to throwing away the rule book, we do not wish to ignore our agenda or our objectives.

A rules-based international order and strong international institutions are also of fundamental importance to the European Union. A commitment to strong multilateralism remains central to the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Ambassador Chris Sanders has, in his statement on behalf of the European Union to this Conference on 9<sup>th</sup> June, reaffirmed these convictions as applied to the 2005 NPT Review Conference and by the relevant EU Common Position. He has also reiterated the EU's commitment to continuing its cooperation programmes for non-proliferation and disarmament. At the May Review Conference the EU has reaffirmed its support for the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and for the Final Document of the Review Conference held in the year 2000.

In his report, "In Larger Freedom," the UN Secretary General pointed out that "the unique status of the nuclear weapon states also entails a unique responsibility". "They must do more", he has said, "including but not limited to further reductions in their arsenals, and pursuing arms control agreements that entail not just dismantlement but irreversibility". This perspective has a deep resonance for non-nuclear weapon States especially here at the Conference on Disarmament. Its fuller realisation would provide an

unshakable foundation for lasting nuclear disarmament. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Mr Dermot Ahern T.D., speaking in New York on 5 May 2005, reaffirmed that since July 1968 our highest priority in the area of disarmament and non proliferation has been support for the NPT and to ensure full respect for all its provisions. Consistent with this approach Ireland continues to support the establishment of a subsidiary body of this Conference to deal specifically with the issue of nuclear disarmament. We also support work beginning on a fissile material cut off treaty. We attach a special importance to the Practical Steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the NPT – particularly the unequivocal undertaking by the Nuclear Weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Ireland remains convinced that disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Ignoring one of these processes could undermine progress on the other. Disarmament should be a key component for our efforts in facing down the challenge of proliferation.

All members of the CD have not ratified the NPT. But the CD can provide a forum where these countries can meaningfully engage in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issues. We urge those States who have not yet acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to do so.

In helping stem the further development of nuclear weapons the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) can be a vital cornerstone of non-proliferation. Negotiation of a CTBT has been one of the greatest achievements of this body. We look forward to the Article XIV Conference which is to take place in September. We hope that it will provide an impetus towards the Treaty's entry into force. We continue to appreciate and support the moratorium on testing while recognising that this cannot be a substitute for the legally binding obligations enshrined in the Treaty.

The comments made by the Norwegian Presidency at our last meeting about the need to garner the necessary "political willingness" to make this Conference function properly have made resonance with many delegates. While this Conference may not yet be able to achieve a binding political consensus on future negotiations it should play a more active role in creating the necessary shared understanding to achieve this. Ireland, therefore, will continue to take a flexible approach to initiatives aimed at getting the Conference to work. We have seen a number of such initiatives including that of the Five Ambassadors and more recently the "Food for Thought Paper". In the course of these initiatives small but not insignificant compromises have emerged. These should be built upon not buried.