



**Statement by Ambassador Naela Gabr
Permanent Representative of Egypt
On behalf of the Group of 21
Formal Plenary Meeting of the Conference of Disarmament
15th of March, 2005**

Mr. President, let me at the outset begin by expressing sincere appreciation for the constructive, tireless efforts which you have exerted during the assumption of your presidency of the CD. We would also like to commend Ambassador Chris Sanders for his notable contribution during his presidency. We assure you of the Group of 21's full cooperation and support. As the Coordinator of the Group of 21, I would like to read out a statement on behalf of the Group:

- 1- Having in mind the context of the Conference on Disarmament, the Group is deeply concerned about the progressive erosion of multilateralism, and emphasizes the importance of collective international efforts and the spirit of multilateralism to enhance and maintain international non-discriminatory disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

The Group highlights the objectives laid down in General Assembly resolution 69/59 entitled 'Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation', which, among other things, reaffirms multilateralism as the core principle in resolving disarmament and non-proliferation concerns.

- 2- The Group stresses that, as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the Conference's program of work should reflect the interests and priorities of all its members and the aspirations of the international community in the field of disarmament. The Group expresses its concern that the Conference of Disarmament has been unable to take up substantive work on the basis of an agreed programme of work since 1999, in spite of the demonstrated flexibility shown by the Group towards a number of formal and informal proposals introduced.

The Group reaffirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on a programme of work which is balanced and comprehensive and reflects the priorities of all the member States of the Conference on Disarmament. In this context, the G-21 reiterates that the A-5 proposal, as contained on document CD 1693/rev.1 of 5 September 2003, remains a viable basis for a Programme of Work and that further consultations on this matter should be continued.

- 3- The Group reaffirms its proposal, as contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1571, on the programme of work and a draft decision and mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The Group emphasizes that nuclear disarmament remains, as before, the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament. It stresses the importance of the elimination of the possibility of nuclear war, the threats to humanity derived from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It underscores the need to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons and emphasizes, in this regard, the urgent need to commence negotiations without delay.

- 4- The Group further expresses its serious concern about the lack of expected progress following the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, made during the 2000 NPT Review Conference.
- 5- The Group has already expressed, in document CD/1549, its position with regard to the establishment of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1, entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', which shall negotiate on the basis of the report of the special coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
- 6- Moreover, the G21 reaffirms its proposal, as contained in Documents CD/1570 and CD/1571 on the programme of work and a draft decision including a mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" to negotiate specific and concrete measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The G21 would like to reiterate that Outer Space is a common heritage of mankind and must be used, explored and utilized for the benefit and interest of all mankind in a spirit of cooperation. The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter imminent attempts for further militarization of outer space.

- 7- While various approaches exist, the Group expresses its conviction that efforts to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued.
- 8- To conclude, the Group hopes that the Conference will commence substantive work during the 2005 annual session and, to this end, affirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on the programme of work. The Group urges other groups to display matching flexibility and call upon the President of the Conference to intensify efforts aimed at finding agreement on a programme of work, so that the substantive work of the Conference can commence without delay, in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Thank you.