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**PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
GENEVA**

STATEMENT BY

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Ambassador & Permanent Representative of India
to the Conference on Disarmament**

GENEVA, 17th May 2006

Mr. President,

My delegation congratulates you warmly on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference and compliments you for efforts to organize structured and interactive deliberations on the issue of prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. You have my delegation's full cooperation in these efforts. We would like to welcome Ambassador Tim Caughley, reincarnated as the Deputy Secretary General of the Conference.

2. We would also like to take this opportunity to compliment your predecessor, Ambassador Park In-Kook, now Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and International Organizations of the Republic of Korea, for his leadership in organizing useful and productive discussions on the question of nuclear disarmament. He also provided a useful compilation of various views, which, together with the verbatim records of our meetings, will provide a good source for reference. Our deliberations were useful in identifying a number of issues related to the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Several delegations, including ours, believe there is a need to establish an ad-hoc committee of the Conference on nuclear disarmament.

3. We welcome structured discussion on the issue of FMCT. This is part of our larger effort to explore and expand the common ground for reaching consensus on the programme of work of the Conference.

4. India was one of the original proponents of an FMCT. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/75L, co-sponsored by India, had expressed its unanimous conviction that a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices would be a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects and had recommended the negotiation of such a treaty in the most appropriate international forum.

5. The Conference had tasked Ambassador Gerald E. Shannon of Canada, at the beginning of its 1994 Session, with seeking the views of members on the most appropriate arrangement to negotiate such a treaty. Further progress was made when the Conference adopted by consensus, his Report of 24th March 1995. He reported that delegations had agreed that the mandate for the Ad-hoc Committee to negotiate an FMCT should be based on Resolution 48/75L of the UN General Assembly. The mandate, contained in the Shannon Report, called upon the Conference to establish an Ad-Hoc Committee on a "ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices" and to direct the Ad-Hoc Committee to negotiate, for this purpose, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty.

6. The Shannon mandate clearly delineated the parameters for negotiating an FMCT. It also reflected the consensus within the international community over the basic goal of the Treaty, as embodied in the 1993 General Assembly resolution, and defined the character of the treaty that was to emerge from the negotiations: it must be non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable. The issue of verifiability of the treaty, as indeed any issues, could be raised during the negotiations. Since the principle of consensus would determine any outcome of these negotiations, delegations that have varying perspectives on different issues should be able to join the negotiations on the basis of the existing mandate, as agreed in 1995, and again in 1998.

7. India continues to believe that any treaty banning the production of fissile material must be non-discriminatory: it must stipulate the same obligations and responsibilities for all States. While the nature, extent and mechanisms for verification shall no doubt be determined during the negotiations, we believe that an FMCT should incorporate a verification mechanism in order to provide the assurance that all States party to it are complying with their obligations under the Treaty. Full compliance by all States with their obligations under international instruments to which they are party is critical to the achievement of the goals envisaged in these instruments. When a State consents to adhere to an instrument, it wants to be assured that other States parties to that instrument are also complying with their obligations. Verification, which serves the dual purpose of detection and deterrence, provides that assurance. Absence of a verification mechanism may engender lack of confidence in compliance with the treaty, encourage wilful non-compliance, and lead to allegations and counter-allegations of non-compliance.

8. As regards the scope of the treaty, we should be guided by the General Assembly resolution of 1993, which expressed the conviction that FMCT would be a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. An FMCT must be a treaty for banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

9. We hope that our deliberations on the subject during this week, and later on the remaining agenda issues, will contribute to reaching an understanding on CD's programme of work.