



STATEMENT BY

**AMBASSADOR MARY WHELAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

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**Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations
56-58 rue de Moillebeau
1209 Geneva
Tel: 022 919 19 50**

Conference on Disarmament – Priority Issues

President,

I will begin by offering my heartfelt good wishes for your tenure as the presiding officer of the Conference. Working with your co-Presidents for 2006, you have already challenged our inaction and have shown creativity in seeking to address our agenda.

I am taking the floor to respond to your request to delegations to identify our priorities for work in this body in 2006. Ireland's priorities are as follows:-

- A. We believe that the CD should commence negotiations on a Treaty dealing with fissile material;
- B. We support the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament;
- C. We see merit in embarking on a process which could lead eventually to agreement on the non-weaponisation of Outer Space.

Ireland is realistic. We appreciate that the CD cannot simultaneously begin serious negotiations on a range of topics. In this context, in 2006 we attach particular priority to commencing negotiations on a fissile material treaty while establishing subsidiary bodies to consider the other areas to which we attach priority.

We would be ready to consider how to move forward on other items of our agenda to which our negotiating partners attach importance. Like others we continue to believe that the A5 proposal has the potential to address the range of concerns in this room.

Since the opening of the Session a number of delegations have identified issues which are not specifically referred to on our agenda and on which they would wish the Conference to develop negotiating mandates. We will carefully consider all such proposals and will, in particular, be guided by the possibility for developing a shared understanding on the need to take action in this forum. While Ireland would not seek to oppose the consideration of any item likely to command a consensus, the introduction of new topics for negotiation into the CD which has failed for nine years to address any item on its agreed agenda, seems akin to trying to build an extension to a building whose foundations are in danger of collapsing.

President,

I wish also to take the opportunity to restate my delegation's strong commitment to enhancing the role of Civil Society in our deliberations. Addressing this Conference in 2004 the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland queried "how a body charged with a mandate of such relevance to humankind and drawing its budget from the United Nations can continue to effectively exclude Civil Society from a meaningful role in its deliberations". In this context, could I express my delegation's strong wish that we can take a further modest step forward in 2006. At minimum my delegation wishes to have the annual statement of NGOs on International Women's Day delivered by its authors.