Madam President,

We would like to begin by reiterating India’s support for the early commencement of substantive work in the CD on the basis of a Programme of Work. As we stated last week, the foremost priority issue for India has been and continues to be nuclear disarmament. Without prejudice to the priority India attaches to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in this forum of a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable FMCT that meets India’s national security interests. India is a nuclear weapon state and a responsible member of the international community and will approach FMCT negotiations as such.

We have been consistent in our support for FMCT negotiations for a long time. India was one of the original co-sponsors of the UNGA resolution 48/75L adopted by consensus in 1993 which envisaged FMCT as a significant contribution to non-proliferation in all its aspects. We joined consensus on the establishment of an Ad hoc Committee on an FMCT in the CD in 1995 and then again in 1998. Similarly, India did not stand in the way of consensus on CD/1864 which provided inter alia for establishment of a Working Group to negotiate an FMCT.

India was able to join the international consensus on FMCT in 1993 as it reflected with clarity the common understanding of the basic objective of the treaty. The mandate for the proposed treaty was explicitly reflected in the GA resolution 48/75L and reconfirmed by the Shannon Report in CD/1299 i.e. to “negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”. This mandate was also reaffirmed in the CD in 1998 and 2009 in its consensus decisions and reiterated in resolutions on the FMCT in the UNGA.
We do not favour reopening this mandate on which there has been longstanding international consensus. We should have no illusions about the opposition to FMCT negotiations and that is a matter of concern not just for India but for the international community as a whole.

Madam President,

India’s support for FMCT negotiations in the CD is consistent with our interest in strengthening the global non-proliferation regime that would add a measure of strategic predictability and a baseline for future global nuclear disarmament efforts. Given this objective and given the CD’s vocation, it is essential that all relevant countries participate in these negotiations in the CD and contribute to their successful outcome.

To conclude, this Conference should be allowed to fulfil its mandate as a negotiating forum by commencing negotiations on the basis of an early decision on its Programme of Work. It is unfortunate that this Conference has been prevented from commencing substantive work – in the immediate context on an FMCT or for that matter on issues that command strong support from members of this Conference be it nuclear disarmament, NSAs or PAROS – on one pretext or the other. While efforts must continue on the latter, in our view, there is strong support in the international community for the early commencement of negotiations on an FMCT.

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