5 February 2013

Intervention by Ambassador Jo Adamson, United Kingdom

Mr President

• Let me join others in thanking you for the work which you and your team have already undertaken to bring us closer to a Programme of Work. I would also like to thank others on the podium for their previous work, and wish future presidents well.

• Under your energetic leadership, and with the cooperation of everyone in this room, I believe that we can reverse the tide of pessimism which has enveloped us for many years. It is not too late.

• Critics say that we lack commitment to disarmament. Let me reiterate that the UK remains absolutely committed to achieving our long-term objective of a world without nuclear weapons.

• Words alone are not enough. Let me draw attention to the United Kingdom’s strong record of taking unilateral action on disarmament, and in meeting our international and legal obligations under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. We know what we agreed to do in the last Action Plan in 2010. We will rededicate our efforts to implementing that plan - which covered all three pillars as well as the Middle East. We are behind on some commitments, but we have not abandoned them.

• Progress and Prioritisation will both be critical to creating the right international environment to deliver our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

• An FMCT is one of the key building blocks of that environment. We believe that it is the next logical step.

• Kennedy, that’s John F Kennedy not my neighbour to the left, once said we should never negotiate out of fear but never fear to negotiate. We want FMCT negotiations to begin as soon as possible. We should not attempt to put in place pre-conditions but explore all of the issues as part of the negotiations themselves.

• With an FMCT in place, we will be a significant step closer to our goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Without an FMCT, we still have no legally binding way of putting a stop to the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.
• We welcome the Canadian initiative to establish a Group of Governmental Experts that will explore the issues around an FMCT to feed into negotiations within the CD, perhaps it can help us to move forward.

• The CD remains the best option for FMCT negotiations. There is little point in trying to develop a Treaty not based on consensus or in a forum without all the key players.

• At the same time, frustration is mounting. We must be able to demonstrate progress if the value of the CD is not to be called into question and rival initiatives put forward that will undermine it.

It is in all our interests to start work on the four CD agenda items. It may take a leap of faith by some, but as consensus is a requirement of that work the risks to any state are minimal.

I wish to echo the words of my colleague from The Netherlands on your draft Programme of Work. It is not optimal as it does not give FMCT its own Working Group. For the UK, CD1864 brokered by the Algerian President and CD 1933 brokered by the Egyptian President remain closer to the optimal. But if others are prepared to show flexibility to break the impasse, then so is the United Kingdom.

Thank you.