Statement by U.S. Acting PermRep Kristine Pelz, July 30, 2013

Mr. President,

The United States would like to express its deep appreciation for your efforts to move the CD out of deadlock and back to work. We have been very impressed with your dedication and determination to move the process forward.

First and foremost, we share the desire of many to see the CD get down to substantive work and, in particular, negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, as reaffirmed by President Obama in his June 19th address to the people of Berlin. In that context, I note that CD 1864 is still the one Program of Work that commanded consensus and for the United States remains – as Ambassador Kennedy emphasized in her farewell remarks – the touchstone for a balanced and comprehensive approach. At the same time, we have welcomed efforts to craft a new PoW that would command consensus, and encourage you in your efforts, Mr. President. Should such a Program of Work be identified, and adopted, we hope that it could carry us forward into 2014.

We also welcome the opportunity to address Secretary-General Tokayev’s proposal on the establishment of an Informal Working Group to Produce a Program of Work. Though our priority remains the adoption of a Program of Work, we consider this could be a useful intermediary step should a Program of Work continue to prove elusive.

Mr. President,

The United States would support the establishment of an informal Working Group with a mandate to produce a Program of Work. We agree with Secretary-General Tokayev’s suggestion that an overly detailed mandate for an informal Working Group “could easily complicate the mandate's adoption.” He suggested a Working Group “to produce a Program of Work that would be robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation.” We interpret that to mean a Program of Work that provides for negotiations on an FMCT, and for continuity in such negotiations once initiated.

We believe that the duration of any informal working group should be limited to the 2013 CD session but hope that, if we are able to develop an acceptable Program of Work during this session, that PoW will also be acceptable at the outset of the 2014 CD session. In this regard, we would note that Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure would not preclude submission in January 2014 of a PoW approved now for revalidation. The United States would also consider including appropriate language in the CD Annual Report to the UN that looks forward to continuing such a working group, if a Program of Work is not agreed in the interim. We also note the informal practice by outgoing and incoming CD Presidencies to conduct consultations during the intersessional period that could pave the way for successful start to the next session of the Conference on Disarmament, a practice we support.

We agree with the Presidency that in selecting a Chairman for the informal working group we should have in mind someone who can lead “the working group to obtain a broad base of support.” and are open to your suggestions.

Mr. President.

The United States would again like to express our appreciation for your efforts during the CD recess to move us forward in our work. Thank you.