



Views of Switzerland on the report of the “Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”, in response to the request of the UN Secretary- General contained in Note Verbale ODA/37-2016/FMCT

Switzerland has long emphasized the need for early negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosives devices (hereafter: treaty). Switzerland welcomes the report of the Governmental Group of Experts (GGE). While this report indicated convergence on a significant number of issues, it also highlighted that work is still needed where different perspectives remain. Importantly, the GGE report confirms the Swiss view that remaining differences should not further delay the commencement of negotiations. While the mandate contained in document CD/1299 has been confirmed by the Group as being the most suitable basis for future negotiations, Switzerland believes that flexibility and creativity could also facilitate progress. Moreover, the dynamic interrelationship between the treaty’s objectives and its scope, definition and verification mechanism, as highlighted by the GGE, underlines that the international community should comprehensively approach these issues without further delay. Such a treaty - together with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty and other additional legally-binding instruments – will contribute to fulfilling the disarmament provisions of article 6 of the Non-proliferation treaty, halting both vertical and horizontal proliferation, and achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. Switzerland re-iterates that such a treaty should take into consideration both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. In this context, Switzerland fully supports the position of many experts reflected in paragraph 22 of the report that *“a ban on new production would be insufficient [...] and that past production should be addressed in some manner in the treaty’s scope”*. Ensuring and verifying that future civil production is only used for civil purposes and that future production for non-proscribed military use is never diverted to proscribed use will be key aspects of any treaty, and verifying that existing fissile material declared excess to military requirements will never be used in nuclear weapons will represent a central disarmament component.

Furthermore, Switzerland fully agrees with the GGE’s view that the principle of irreversibility should be at the center of the treaty’s verification system, in order to consistently fulfill its objectives. Regarding legal arrangements, Switzerland believes that since the treaty’s provisions will be of particular relevance for States with unsafeguarded facilities and/or enrichment and reprocessing capabilities, various options regarding its entry into force require further analysis during negotiations. Lastly, neither its duration nor a potential withdrawal clause should undermine the durability and irreversibility of the treaty.