



Delivered by H.E Ambassador Dr. Ahmed Ihab Gamaleldin
The Conference on Disarmament (CD)

Thursday 20 May 2021

Thank you, Mr. President,

Thank you for organizing this week's plenary discussions on agenda item 2. I would like to thank the speakers who have contributed to these discussions on Tuesday and in today's plenary session. My delegation fully associates itself with the Statement of the G21 that was delivered by the delegation of Iraq in the last plenary session.

Mr. President,

Given the unfortunate circumstances that the CD has been suffering from and the continued stalemate that persists, it is of importance to use those thematic discussions to reflect on the matters at hand and the reasons that might have contributed to this regrettable situation.

This week our discussion is focused on agenda item 2 titled "Prevention of a nuclear war, including all related matters". Before making my remarks on the sub-topics that you have proposed for discussion under this item, it is important to take a step back and reflect on the origins of this agenda item. Allow me to use the term "go back to basics" (a term that was often used lately but unfortunately not practiced), as this will allow us to put things into perspective and avoid futile discussions on peripheral issues.

The "raison d'être" of the CD is Nuclear Disarmament and based on this fact its agenda was articulated. If we intend to be successful in our efforts, we should be advancing the work of the Conference under this agenda item from this vantage point. Any topics that are to be considered under the framework of this agenda item should contribute directly and clearly to nuclear disarmament. Proposals that are based on narrow national interests, with the aim of limiting the agenda item to marginal issues and non-proliferation measures alone, will not be acceptable and will only lead us to a deadlock.

Mr. President,

While we acknowledge that risk reduction measures and trust and confidence building measures could contribute positively to peace and security, they should neither be used as an excuse to renege from legal obligations nor to further delay the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Those measures are often promoted as means to build confidence between conflicting parties, and to establishing favourable circumstances that might allow progress on nuclear disarmament. The ambiguity, looseness and pre-conditionality that characterizes those concepts make them doubtful for mainstream Non – Nuclear Weapons States, which was evident in the level of interest in the last plenary session.

What is more puzzling is that we often witness Nuclear Weapon States, on one hand, promoting these concepts in their statements, and on the other hand, conducting policy reviews to modernize and expand their nuclear arsenals and decrease transparency in this regard.

Egypt strongly believes that as long as the stalemate in advancing nuclear disarmament persists the world will certainly continue to suffer from risks, threats and insecurity.

Mr. President,

Now to the matter at hand.

The question of fissile materials has gradually and justifiably taken its place at the forefront of issues of the Conference on Disarmament, especially considering the inseparable linkage between this issue and nuclear disarmament. Against this backdrop, Egypt strongly believes that the conference should start negotiations on a non- discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable legally binding instrument banning fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The aspired instrument should fulfil both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. This can never be properly done if fissile material stocks are excluded from its scope. An instrument that only bans future production is not a priority and will not represent any significant contribution to the goal of Nuclear Disarmament.

Egypt participated actively and constructively in all of the recent endeavours dedicated to make progress on this issue namely the Group of Governmental Experts, the high-level FMCT expert preparatory group and the work of Subsidiary body 2 in the Conference of disarmament in 2018. Egypt stands ready to contribute to any future efforts that may lead to progress on this issue and looks forward to pursuing this goal within the CD within the framework of a balanced and comprehensive program of work that accommodates all the priorities of its member states.

I thank you Mr. President.