**Senior Advisor Beverly Mather-Marcus’s Remarks to the**

**Conference on Disarmament on the Subsidiary Bodies**

**March 10, 2022**

Thank you Madame President.

I would like to speak on both the practical set-up of the Subsidiary Bodies and to the context in which they will meet.

On the perhaps simpler question of the practical set-up, the United States is flexible on the format of the Subsidiary Bodies. We can see arguments for both formal and informal sessions and are prepared to participate in either. Perhaps a blend of formal and informal meetings is the best approach.

We understand there has been some discussion of recording informal sessions for the reference of Conference Members only. We believe such an option would be very helpful, particularly for our successors.

We also want to see the full breadth of the CD’s discussions reflected in the final report. To that end, we recommend that at least a complete listing of our meetings and their topics be included in the final report. That way we can ensure that all the Subsidiary Body meetings are accounted for.

As to the topics of discussion in each Subsidiary Body – we are in favor of the simplest and most inclusive approach possible. We do not think it would be a good use of anyone’s time to try to compile an exhaustive list of every possible thing that we could talk about. We also do not want to pre-judge where the conversations may take us.

Therefore, as some of the Subsidiary Body Coordinators already suggested, we think a simple agreement that all delegations can raise any topic that merits attention under the agenda item being covered by that Subsidiary Body is the best way forward.

That said, the United States naturally has priorities under each agenda item as we all do. If it is helpful, therefore, these are:

* In Subsidiary Body 1: Mitigating the security challenges that drive states to retain nuclear arsenals; nuclear weapons stockpile transparency; and nuclear disarmament verification,
* In Subsidiary Body 2: FMCT and a moratoria on fissile material production, are obviously our priority. We also believe Strategic Risk Reduction should be addressed.
* For Subsidiary Body 3: We want to discuss forward progress on Responsible Behaviors, and note that this may be one of the times a formal discussion would be appropriate as the Ambassador of Chile mentioned a panel presentation – so that we can record it.
* In Subsidiary Body 4: Support for relevant protocols of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones and compliance with international obligations.

We would like to discuss emerging technological challenges in Subsidiary Body 5. However, as our EU colleague stated, we must reiterate our condemnation in the strongest possible terms Belarus’s support for the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Which brings me to the context in which we will operate.

All of the subsidiary bodies are meeting amidst Russia’s unprovoked, unjust, and premeditated invasion of Ukraine. Many member states have condemned this brutal assault. Some have not addressed the invasion in the CD. And a minor few have used this Conference to diminish Russia’s responsibility and even rationalize its invasion.

The Ukrainian Ambassador spoke far more eloquently than I ever could on the realities of Russia’s aggression during our informal discussion on Women’s Participation in the CD. I regret that it was an informal meeting and therefore her remarks were not recorded for posterity.

This was an attack that Vladimir Putin has planned for a long time, as the evidence shows. He rejected every good-faith effort to address his fabricated security concerns and to avoid needless conflict and human suffering – as he could have by engaging in diplomacy and dialogue.

Putin’s rejection of diplomacy is a direct rebuke to the rules-based international order, including the Conference on Disarmament. All member states must consider the question of what this aggression means for our work.

For our part, we believe it clearly shows why issues like transparency, risk reduction, acting in good faith, and verification are so critical.

These are not just words on a page or in a speech. They are real-world necessities, and we sincerely hope that the members of this Conference are prepared to address these and other priorities in more than platitudes as we move into Subsidiary Body discussions.