



REPRÉSENTATION PERMANENTE DE LA FRANCE
AUPRÈS DE LA CONFÉRENCE DU DÉSARMEMENT

Conference on Disarmament

Statement in Plenary Session by Ms. Alice GUITTON

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France
to the Conference on Disarmament

Geneva, 24 May 2016

(COURTESY TRANSLATION)

Madam President,

I have requested the floor to inform the disarmament community that following internal arrangements, the United States took over from France the coordinating role of the P5 process on May 1st 2016. Since our time as coordinator lasted less than one year, France will resume this role as of January 1st 2017, until the 1st NPT PrepCom in May.

Against this backdrop, please allow me to take this opportunity to say a few words in my national capacity regarding the P5 process and activities in support of the implementation of the NPT, and to take stock of our action over the past few months.

As NPT nuclear-weapon States, the P5 reaffirmed at the UNGA First Committee last October the shared goal of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament as referenced in the preamble and provided for in Article VI of the NPT. In this regard, we remain steadfast in our commitment to seeking a safer world for all and achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We will continue to pursue progressive and concrete steps towards this end.

Since the P5 process was initiated by the UK in 2009, China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States and France have been working closely together to foster coordination and dialogue on the NPT implementation. The P5 process serves to develop common approaches to the disarmament agenda in accordance with our commitments and our obligations, in particular with those stemming from the NPT, which is the foundation of nuclear disarmament efforts. Through increasing mutual confidence and understanding, the P5 States demonstrate their commitment to live up to their responsibilities by seeking a world without nuclear weapons, in a way that promotes international stability, peace and security, and based on the principle of increased and undiminished security for all.

Over the past six years, the P5 has met on a regular basis to discuss issues related to nuclear disarmament and to promote concrete deliverables in this field. Six capital-level

.../...

conferences have been held, each time with an increasingly developed agenda and a more robust discussion with the wider disarmament community, including by meeting with non-nuclear weapon States and exchanging with civil society. Each conference has built on the last and helps lay the groundwork for additional steps.

The P5 has also worked to implement the 2010 NPT Action Plan, in particular to further enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence. In this regard, a common reporting framework has been developed under France's leadership and has been used to produce national reports in 2014, which have increased the P5 transparency. A first edition of a Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms has also been completed under China's leadership, which enhances the mutual understanding and will aid the P5 in pursuing its disarmament goals. This edition was released during the ninth NPT Review Conference earlier last year and a side event was held to present this work.

After the Review Conference of the NPT last year, my country assumed the coordinating role in July 2015. Since then, we have endeavored to give a new momentum to the process in gathering the group on a more frequent basis so as to deepen our work together. As part of our transparency efforts, we organized a side-event on the P5 Process in October last year in New York, the first ever side-event of this kind held by our five countries on the margins of the UNGA First Committee.

Madam President,

As a new NPT review cycle begins this year, France believes that stronger and deeper P5 cooperation is essential to make progress in a concrete manner for the benefit of all NPT parties. We also believe that an incremental and pragmatic approach is the only effective option for making progress in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The current debate on nuclear disarmament reveals a great variety of approaches. We understand the frustration and impatience of some, who feel that nuclear disarmament is not progressing fast enough or far enough. Even so, nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved overnight through mere incantations. As the facts have shown, disarmament cannot be decreed, it must be built.

To be effective, progress towards nuclear disarmament needs to continue within a solid framework. The NPT and the existing machinery set out in the Final Document of SSOD-I have proven to be efficient venues to advance nuclear disarmament through a constructive and mutually respectful dialogue. Productive results can only be ensured through a consensus-based approach, which must be genuinely inclusive and fully anchored in the security context.

France believes that it is in P5 countries best interest to intensify their efforts to increase dialogue and interaction, in order to further develop the disarmament agenda.

With regard to substance, my country intends to increase and deepen the work already carried out with its partners during the last review cycle in several areas. We would in particular see merits in updating and expanding the P5 glossary on key nuclear terms, including considering future editions. We are also looking forward to pursuing the dialogue with our four partners and to deepen the work on reporting and transparency. We are also open to a strengthening of our engagement with the wider disarmament community, in particular by furthering our interaction and dialogue with non-nuclear weapon States, as well as with civil society.

Amongst other areas of cooperation, France stands ready to intensify its interaction with its P5 partners so as to further strengthen all three pillars of the NPT, including by addressing safeguards and compliance issues and supporting peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are also ready to continue to work closely with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in Vienna on the development of the Treaty's verification regime. On the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT, we reaffirm the vital importance and urgency of the entry into force of the Treaty.

In addition to continuing existing cooperation, France is of the view that the P5 dialogue and collaboration could be expanded, and that new avenues could be explored.

Madam President,

An incremental, step-by-step approach is the only possible option for making progress towards nuclear disarmament. My country continues to believe that after the CTBT, the next logical and effective step is the commencement of negotiations in the CD of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, building on the work carried out to date on this matter.

All States can help to advance nuclear disarmament by creating the necessary security environment through resolving regional tensions, tackling proliferation challenges, promoting collective security, and making progress in all areas of arms control and disarmament, taking into account all factors that could affect global strategic security and stability. As far as we are concerned, we are committed to continue our individual and collective efforts, including through the P5 process, to advance nuclear disarmament.

Thank you Madam President./.