

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ANUPAM RAY, CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT – February 16, 2023

Thank you, Mr. President,

I would like to preface my remarks by welcoming our distinguished colleagues from Austria and Syria.

Let me join others, again, in congratulating you on the manner in which you and your team have conducted the first presidency of this year.

We also note, again, with appreciation your efforts to find common ground to enable the CD to commence substantive work.

We further note the circulation of another draft programme of work for which we are thankful to you and your team. We also appreciate the clarifications that you have provided.

We will, like others, refer it to capital. We would like to seek some more time to give it our fullest consideration.

Mr. President,

My delegation would, in its preliminary reaction, reiterate its position that the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for the international community must build on the work that has already been done.

We would, in this context, also like to recall and reiterate our statements of January 26 and February 14.

Although there is much in your draft to which we can agree, we believe that the Conference should commence immediate negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.

We feel that a balanced and comprehensive programme of work needs to have a working group with a negotiating mandate for a FMCT.

We also feel that the draft as it stands now does not yet have full agreement of all member states. Disagreements exist about substance, about procedure, and, about the implementation of a possible decision. A number of specific language suggestions have been made. We will therefore continue to work with the presidency and other delegations to make progress towards our common goal, which is reaching consensus on a Programme of Work to enable the CD to move forward. We believe that consensus, like in 2022, is possible if all delegations demonstrate flexibility. It will also require more time.

We are confident that under your Presidency, no efforts will be spared to find solutions taking into account the interests of all stake-holders.