



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

**Remarks at the First Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the Fissile
Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)**

**Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

As delivered



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Your Excellency, Foreign Minister IWAYA,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating Japan for its initiative in establishing the “Friends of the FMCT” Group and for convening this first FMCT Friends Ministerial Meeting.

A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is an essential element of a world free of nuclear weapons. And it is long overdue.

For years now, many States have expressed the view that the issue is ripe for negotiations. An FMCT is one of the highest nuclear disarmament priorities, yet it remains unfulfilled.

I reaffirm my support for the immediate commencement of negotiations, in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), consistent with CD/1299.

I would also like to express my appreciation for past efforts by the members of the CD to make progress, even in the absence of negotiations.

Excellencies,

I have long maintained that there are two initiatives outside the CD that could help bring States towards the negotiating table.

The first relates to the value of confidence-building measures. Moratoria on the production of fissile materials have already been announced by several nuclear-

weapon States. While not a substitute for a legally-binding treaty, these concrete expressions of commitment to the FMCT's purpose are a critical step towards its negotiation. I therefore encourage those States that have yet to announce such moratoria to do the same. And those who have, to maintain them.

Second, General Assembly resolution 78/28 requested the Secretary-General and myself to facilitate the efforts of States that possess or produce fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices to engage in transparency and confidence-building measures, with a view to launching negotiations. I stand ready to provide whatever support is needed, without prejudice to efforts in the CD and in support of commencing negotiations in that body.

One area where there does seem to be room for forward movement is discussions on what the verification of an FMCT might look like. Advancing this discussion could be a priority for multilateral efforts on nuclear disarmament verification.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The diverse membership of the FMCT Friends is part of its strength, allowing it to bridge divides with dialogue. But dialogue alone is not enough. It must contain fresh thinking, renewed impetus and good faith engagement if States are to return to the negotiating table.

I wish the Group all the very best in its endeavors. As always, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to support you.

I thank you very much for your attention.