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# Conference on Disarmament

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## **Note verbale dated 1 September 2011 from the Permanent Mission of Australia to the Conference on Disarmament addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference transmitting the report entitled “The 2011 Australia-Japan FMCT Experts Side Events: Chairs’ Final Report, Mr. Peter Woolcott, Ambassador of Australia and Mr. Akio Suda, Ambassador of Japan”**

The Australian Permanent Mission to the Conference on Disarmament presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and has the honour to transmit the attached report, entitled “The 2011 Australia-Japan FMCT Experts Side Events: Chairs’ Final Report, Mr. Peter Woolcott, Ambassador of Australia and Mr. Akio Suda, Ambassador of Japan”.

The 2011 Australia-Japan FMCT Experts Side Events addressed the issue of a future treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This is an issue of relevance to the Conference’s agenda item 1 “Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament” and its agenda item 2 “Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”.

The Australian Permanent Mission would be grateful if this report could be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed to all Member States to the Conference, as well as to Observer States participating in the Conference.

## **The 2011 Australia-Japan FMCT Experts Side Events Chair's Final Report**

### **Mr. Peter Woolcott, Ambassador of Australia and Mr. Akio Suda, Ambassador of Japan**

1. In 2011, Australia and Japan hosted three “experts side events” in the Palais des Nations, Geneva on aspects of the proposed treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, commonly known as the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT).

2. These three side events, held over nine half-day sessions during the first and second parts of the 2011 session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), offered the opportunity for CD delegations and experts from capitals to exchange views on topics related to the proposed FMCT, notably definitions and verification. The discussions were animated by the active participation of Mr. Bruno Pellaud of Switzerland, to whom the Chairs extend their particular thanks, and of representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) were also represented at the side events.

3. The Chair's reports of these side events are contained in three CD documents: CD/1906 of 14 March 2011, CD/1909 of 27 May 2011 and CD/1917 of 30 August 2011. The Chairs hope that those reports will continue to constitute a resource for CD member and observer states. This Chairs' final report offers some final observations and perspectives on the side events.

4. Australia and Japan were motivated in hosting the three side events by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's address to the CD on 26 January 2011. In that address, the Secretary-General called for “a basic process to educate each other and build trust which will inform and facilitate the formal process once the Conference on Disarmament adopts its work programme”. The Chairs consider that the side events met this call and that in doing so, achieved three modest but useful results.

5. First, the side events showed that when they make the choice to do so, CD delegations can build confidence and reciprocate trust. The Chairs valued the demonstrated willingness of a great many CD delegations to participate in the side events, to share information, to listen and learn, with open minds and a spirit of collegiality.

6. Secondly, the side events helped lift the quality of discussion in the CD on issues relating to the proposed FMCT. The CD's extended impasse has eroded experience, capacity and knowledge within CD delegations. The side events were specifically designed to redress this situation. They were designed to support the CD and to assist learning by bringing CD delegations and experts together and by providing the opportunity for sustained focus on particular FMCT-related topics. The result has been more substantive interventions on FMCT during plenary discussions in the CD's 2011 session.

7. Thirdly, the side events helped renew focus on where key substantive differences on FMCT lie, including on definitions, verification, scope and institutional issues. The side events thus provided a renewed appreciation of the challenges to be faced in FMCT negotiations. They also provided an impetus for further elaboration and clarification of national positions by individual governments. At the same time, the interventions of some delegations during the side events offered glimpses of how particular differences in national positions might begin to narrow when FMCT negotiations begin.

8. Ultimately, these three side events and the modest but useful results described in this final report must be seen in context. The CD is still failing to take an essential step to a world free of nuclear weapons: launching negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the Shannon Mandate (CD/1299 of 24 March 1995). The Chairs consider that this failure is deeply regrettable and that it requires urgent redress. They also consider that when FMCT-related work is focused on substantive issues, the value of the proposed treaty is reinforced and the confidence which new verification measures would bring becomes clear.

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