OEWG « Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations »
(UNGA R 67/56)
Statement of Belgium
General exchange

1. Belgium voted in favour of the resolution creating this OEWG. However this cannot be interpreted as a diminished interest for the Conference for Disarmament, nor as an implicit signal for the creation of a new forum for disarmament in the absence of political will to agree on a programme of work at the CD. Our position is that the Conference for Disarmament must start its work immediately in the framework of a balanced and substantive programme of work. Belgium believes that the conditions are ripe to start with the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and we call all partners to adopt a constructive approach. We must take our responsibility in order to achieve this objective that is within reach. In doing so we will make an important and concrete step forward on the path towards disarmament.

2. Disarmament and non-proliferation go hand in hand and progress in both areas must contribute to international peace and security. For this reason, we should not limit ourselves to pious wishes or get distracted by lofty declarations. What is needed is a thorough and constant reality check, taking into account the existing serious proliferation challenges.

3. Belgium shares the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. This is a long term vision that can become reality only if all nuclear weapon states commit themselves to a process of concrete, irreversible and verifiable policy changes and reductions and if the Non-Proliferation Treaty is truly universal and fully respected.

4. Belgium continues to regard the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes.

5. Belgium repeatedly expressed deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and reaffirmed the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, while convinced that every effort should be made to avoid nuclear war and nuclear terrorism.

6. Belgium is convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons cannot forego the requirements of transparency, accountability, verifiability and irreversibility. Moreover, our vision of a nuclear weapon free world is based on the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the conclusion of a Treaty banning the production of new Fissile Material. We call on all States concerned to commit themselves to ratification of the CTBT, to the commencement of FMCT negotiations and to the reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament.