

CD Breaks Deadlock on Work Plan

- [Arms Control Today](#)

[Cole Harvey](#)

The Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD) agreed on a program of work May 29, ending 12 years of deadlock. The 65-member conference, which operates by consensus, agreed to negotiate a verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons, or a fissile material cutoff treaty (FMCT). The CD also agreed to enter into substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and assurances that non-nuclear-weapon states will not be attacked with nuclear weapons. The CD agreed to establish working groups to consider all four issues.

Dozens of delegations hailed the agreement. The U.S. representative, Garold Larson, said the United States looks forward to "challenging" work after "a decade of stalemate." The Russian delegate, Victor Vasiliev, expressed hope that the agreement "would open up a new chapter for new agreements in international peace and security."

Some delegates, while saying they were pleased that the CD had reached consensus, expressed disappointment that the program of work was not more ambitious. India's representative, Hamid Ali Rao, said that the negotiation of an FMCT would be "a step forward" but faulted the conference for failing to agree to multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Similarly, Zamir Akram of Pakistan said the agreement was "not perfect" but joined the consensus in order to end the years of deadlock in the conference.

Idriss Jazairy of Algeria, who held the rotating presidency of the CD during the negotiation of the work program, said that the current international climate was "propitious" for agreement in the CD. He cited a growing chorus of high-level voices for nuclear arms control, including a March speech on disarmament and nonproliferation by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the April 1 joint declaration by President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. He also counted an EU action plan on disarmament and China's support for a nuclear-free world among "many encouraging factors to resume the work" of the CD.

[Click here to comment on this article.](#)

Source URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009-06/cd-breaks-deadlock-work-plan>