

News Release

April 10, 1995

No. 66

CANADA TO LEAD MAJOR NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that the 37 member states of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva have appointed Canada as the first chair of the upcoming multilateral negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material (plutonium and highly enriched uranium) used in nuclear weapons. This treaty is commonly referred to as the Cut-Off Convention.

"The launching of these negotiations under Canadian chairmanship represents a major step forward for the nuclear disarmament agenda and the fulfilment of a long-standing Canadian foreign policy objective. It is a testimony to the leadership of Canada's ambassador to the CD, Gerald Shannon, who for the last 18 months has acted as Special Co-ordinator for the Cut-Off Convention," said Mr. Ouellet.

An effective, verifiable Cut-Off Convention would prohibit non-nuclear countries from illegally purchasing the essential material for nuclear weapons. It would also cap the production of fissile material in nuclear weapons states.

The decision to proceed with these negotiations provides important momentum for the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review and Extension Conference, which takes place in New York, April 17-May 12.

Canada is committed to the indefinite, unconditional extension of the NPT, which is the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Negotiations are also under way on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to prohibit nuclear tests in all environments for all time.

