

will receive similar guidance. We also hope that, in the spirit of the negotiations under way, the NWS will refrain from testing during this interim period.

- Second, building on the momentum of the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] negotiations and reflecting the real political will to act on the nuclear disarmament agenda, the Conference on Disarmament made a major decision on March 23 to begin negotiations on a convention to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes – the "Cut-off Convention."

It is with considerable pride that I make this statement for two reasons: first, the negotiation of a Cut-off Convention has been a long-standing Canadian foreign-policy objective. Second, it was after almost 14 months of concerted effort by Canada's Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament that this consensus for a negotiating mandate was achieved.

Of course, our work is not over on this issue – it has only begun. The conclusion of an effective Cut-off Convention will require the concerted and consistent application of political will and diplomatic imagination. Canada, for its part, is firmly committed to these negotiations.

- Third, the NWS have taken significant steps with their recent declarations on security assurances. The provision of such assurances, like the further extension of nuclear weapons-free zones, are important confidence-building measures that are in everyone's security interest.

Further, the major nuclear weapons states have recommitted themselves to their Article VI obligations. This sends a powerful message on behalf of the future nuclear disarmament agenda.

These developments, welcome as they are, would make little sense in the absence of the NPT. Without the NPT, the keystone of the non-proliferation system, the effectiveness of these complementary arrangements would be seriously questioned.

Thus, it is not simply that in order to make progress on the nuclear control and disarmament agenda we need the NPT; it is that we need the NPT in order to derive full and maximum benefit from these other disarmament efforts.

Why the NPT?

The fact is that the NPT provides a stable, predictable security environment, which is the prerequisite for nuclear disarmament.