Thank you, President Grinius. Excellencies, colleagues, I am pleased to join you today at the start of the 2011 session of the Conference on Disarmament. The CD is the international community’s only standing multilateral negotiating forum for arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation agreements. It remains a vital institution for all of us.

Mr. President, we are heartened by your activism, enthusiasm and determination to move the Conference forward, including your invitation, along with CD Secretary General Ordzhonikidze, for Ministerial-level attendance at this year’s
opening sessions. We believe that the more we focus attention on the CD’s current plight, the more the international community will insist on setting this important body on the path of progress.

Mr. President, you may count on my government’s full support as you and your colleagues strive to move the CD to action. Ambassador Laura Kennedy and the U.S. Delegation stand ready to assist you in your important work.

CD’s Historic Role

The CD and its predecessor bodies have forged historic agreements to eliminate and control the spread of weapons of mass destruction. From the NPT, to the BWC, to the CWC, to the CTBT, this Conference’s record of concrete achievements that contribute to international peace and security is second to none.

When President Obama spoke in Prague in April 2009 about his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, he recognized the need to create the conditions to bring about such a world. The U.S. administration has been working diligently on this agenda, which includes stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, reducing nuclear arsenals, and securing nuclear materials.

Mr. President, last year, the international community undertook to breathe new life into the global arms control and nonproliferation agenda. The United States was pleased to play an active role in this effort. Of particular note, the NPT Review Conference of 2010 provided a major boost to multilateral efforts to strengthen international security. It renewed Parties’ commitment to a set of common objectives; provided a plan for pursuing those objectives in the Treaty’s main pillars of nonproliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and it restored confidence in the global regime on which the NPT is based. Additionally, the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and the completion of the New Start Treaty between the United States and Russian Federation have contributed to the tremendous momentum for even further progress.

UNSYG/HLM

We applaud the efforts by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to advance the goals of multilateral arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament and fully endorse his appeal to the Conference on Disarmament just yesterday. We share his assessment of last September that, in light of the CD’s past accomplishments and its record of making progress even in a complex political and security context, there is no good reason for stagnation. And yet, for nearly 15 years, this multilateral negotiating body has registered no concrete progress.

Current State of Affairs

To be sure, there have been glimmers of hope and false starts, most recently in June 2009, the last time I had the pleasure to speak to this plenary about the goals of this organization. Then, the CD agreed to a comprehensive and balanced program of work to begin negotiations of a verifiable Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), as well as to conduct substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

There was great hope that the 2009 agreement outlined in CD/1864 finally would revive the CD from its long slumber. As we know, for one very specific reason, this was not to be. As my government noted last September 24th at the UN Secretary General’s High Level Meeting in New York, “a single country – a good friend of the United States – changed its mind and has blocked the CD from implementing its work plan.”

As a result, we find ourselves starting the 15th annual CD session since the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations in 1996 with this institution dead in the water.
Mr. President, we can and must do better. Waiting ad infinitum for the CD to commence negotiations on an FMCT, and to engage in serious discussions on other issues of concern to CD Member States, is not a viable option.

After all of the progress that has been achieved on arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation in the last two years, we must look forward and move with purpose, especially in this, the most important international arms control forum.

**FMCT**

Mr. President, an FMCT long has been one of the key goals of multilateral arms control. A cutoff will provide a firm foundation for future disarmament efforts, and help to consolidate the arms control gains made since the end of the Cold War. It is one of the key steps called for in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference. An FMCT’s verifiable controls on fissile material will play an important role by strengthening confidence among the relevant states and help to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, no other world body of sovereign states is better suited to negotiate an FMCT. We readily acknowledge that an FMCT would have profound security implications for countries that have unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, including the United States of America. Under the CD’s rules of procedure and consensus principle, every State assembled in this room will have an equal opportunity to defend its interests and ensure that an FMCT does not harm its vital interests.

The entire point of seeking to pursue an FMCT here, in the CD, is precisely because of the consensus principle undergirding this body’s substantive work. No country need fear the outcome of FMCT negotiations. And no country should feel it necessary to abuse the consensus principle and frustrate everyone else’s desire to resume serious disarmament efforts and negotiations.

**Time Is Running Out**

In short, Mr. President, it’s time for the members of this body to approve a program of work and get started on FMCT negotiations in the CD. If we cannot find a way to begin these negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, then we will need to consider other options. The calls for exploring such alternatives were in evidence at this year’s HLM and during the subsequent UNGA First Committee session. The longer the CD languishes, the louder and more persistent such calls will become.

Should we not be able to agree to begin negotiations now, in preparation for CD negotiations on a Fissile Materiels Cutoff Treaty, we strongly support the idea of robust plenary discussion on broad FMCT issues, reinforced by expert-level technical discussions on specific FMCT topics which could further inform CD plenary exchanges.

This work will be, not a substitute for FMCT negotiations in the CD, but healthy intellectual homework that will prepare the way for what almost certainly will be a difficult negotiation.

We urge every CD Member State to dispatch to Geneva scientific and technical experts on fissile material to support such discussions here in the coming weeks. The U.S. experts will follow me here in several weeks, and be available to contribute to discussions in the CD, and hold meetings on the margins with interested delegations.

We look forward to contributing to these FMCT discussions, in CD plenary and, informally, elsewhere in the Palais, and hope that they will shed light on our own views and on the views of others.

The United States will also be prepared to discuss other issues of importance to CD Member States. A few words on some of the central matters before this institution:

**Nuclear Disarmament**
Mr. President, the Administration is pleased that the United States Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification of the New START Treaty on December 22 of last year. When he called to offer his condolences for the tragedy at Domodedovo Airport, President Obama congratulated President Medvedev on the successful vote in the Russian State Duma. Yesterday, there was a positive vote in the Federation Council, which is excellent news. The legislative process will be followed by an exchange of the instruments of ratification, which will bring the Treaty into force.

When the Treaty is fully implemented, it will result in the lowest number of strategic nuclear warheads deployed by the United States and the Russian Federation since the 1950s.

The New START Treaty sets the stage for further limits on and reductions in nuclear arms. As President Obama stated when he signed the New START Treaty in Prague on April 8, 2010, once the Treaty enters into force, the United States intends to pursue with Russia further reductions in strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons, including on non-deployed nuclear weapons.

The U.S. Senate made clear its strong interest in addressing the numerical disparity in non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons between the United States and Russia. The Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification calls for the United States to seek to initiate negotiations with Russia to limit and reduce tactical nuclear weapons within a year of entry into force of the New START Treaty.

Work is already underway in Washington to prepare for such dialogue with Russia on future talks.

The United States will continue its long tradition of transparency about nuclear weapons, as exemplified by the stockpile numbers that we released during the NPT Review Conference, as well as the many briefings and documents which we made available in the run-up to and at the RevCon, and subsequently.

As a follow-up to the September 2009 P-5 conference on verification, transparency and confidence building, the five will meet later this year to take up these issues again, as part of our effort to implement the Review Conference’s final Document.

**NWFZs**

Mr. President, the United States supports properly crafted nuclear weapons-free zones (NWFZs) because, if the relevant countries fully comply with them, they can contribute to regional security and stability and reinforce the world-wide nuclear nonproliferation regime. We believe that the protocols to the treaties establishing such zones are the most appropriate way of implementing legally-binding negative security assurances.

At last year’s NPT Review Conference Secretary Clinton announced that the United States would submit for Senate advice and consent to ratification protocols to the nuclear weapons-free zones established for Africa and the South Pacific.

Secretary Clinton also made clear that the United States was prepared to consult with parties to nuclear weapons-free zones in Central and Southeast Asia in an effort to reach agreement that would allow us to sign the treaties’ protocols. Work has been ongoing since the Review Conference to fulfill these pledges and we remain ready for constructive dialogue with the parties to the Central and Southeast Asia nuclear weapons-free zones.

**Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space**

Mr. President, the U.S. National Space Policy was released on June 28, 2010, and reflects the principles and goals to be used in shaping the conduct of U.S. space programs and activities. One provision of the policy states that the United

http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/155400.htm
States will pursue pragmatic and voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures – or TCBMs – to strengthen stability in space by mitigating the risk of mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust.

To implement this part of the policy, the United States is continuing to consult with the European Union on its initiative to develop a comprehensive set of multilateral TCBMs, also known as the “Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.” We plan to make a decision in the coming weeks as to whether the United States can sign on to this Code, including what, if any, modifications would be necessary.

Additionally, we look forward to working with our colleagues in the international community in the Group of Government Experts (GGE), which was established by Resolution 65/68 during the 65th session of the UN General Assembly. It is our hope that this GGE will serve as a constructive mechanism to examine voluntary and pragmatic TCBMs in space that address real problems.

Within a short time, the United States will be announcing its National Security Space Strategy. Like the Space Policy, the National Space Strategy will be based on the notion of shared interest: It is in the shared interest of all space-faring nations to ensure the responsible, peaceful and safe use of space.

With regard to arms control, the National Space Policy states that the United States will consider space-related arms control concepts and proposals that meet the criteria of equitability and effective verification and which enhance the national security of the United States and its allies. The United States continues to support the inclusion of a non-negotiating, or discussion, mandate in any CD program of work under the agenda item, “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space,” which is known as PAROS.

**CTBT**

Mr. President, turning now to other important matters, at the NPT Review Conference, Secretary Clinton had reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The Obama Administration will continue to lay the groundwork for positive U.S. Senate consideration of the CTBT, working closely with the Senate, and to bolster international support for the Treaty.

While the Administration prepares for U.S. Senate consideration of the Treaty, the United States has increased its level of participation in all of the activities of the CTBTO’s Preparatory Commission in preparing for the entry into force of the CTBT, especially with respect to the Treaty’s verification regime.

U.S. technical experts are working closely with their counterparts from the Provisional Technical Secretariat to explore joint efforts to improve the capabilities of the various networks of the global International Monitoring System and the functions of the International Data Centre in Vienna.

After an absence of eight years, U.S. experts are fully engaged in advancing the effectiveness of the On-Site Inspection element of the verification regime, both from policy and technical perspectives.

The United States has also assumed full responsibility for the costs of operating, maintaining, and sustaining the 31 stations of the International Monitoring System assigned by the Treaty to the United States.

**BWC RevCon**

The CD can claim important success in its work over the years. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) stands out as one of those success stories. Our own CD Ambassador Kennedy recently was appointed to serve concurrently as the U.S. Special Representative for Biological Weapons Convention Issues. Her critical task leading up to the Seventh Review
Conference is to lead U.S. efforts in working with others, including many of you here today, to ensure the groundwork is done to help ensure a successful BWC RevCon and work thereafter.

We believe the RevCon should take decisive action and adopt a program of future work that will allow the BWC to make major contributions to building global capacity to combat infectious disease and prevent bioterrorism, as well as promoting confidence in effective BWC implementation and compliance. The RevCon should also take steps that enhance the effectiveness of the BWC as a norm against biological weapons, advance the goal of universal adherence, and build on past exchanges in order to provide the premiere forum for multi-sectoral information exchange, coordination, and cooperation to identify, mitigate, and manage biological threats.

We look forward to working in close cooperation with BWC Parties to achieve our mutual goals for the BWC RevCon under the excellent guidance of our BWC President and your CD colleague Ambassador Van den Ijssel.

Conclusion

Mr. President, last year, we all witnessed substantial progress in the arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament arenas. That progress did not happen by accident. It required the sustained commitment and hard work of many, many individuals and governments from around the world. It required trust, and compromise, and a willingness to listen to all sides and to engage.

We are making steady progress toward the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. This step-by-step approach will require time, effort and the commitment and imagination of us all.

Whether we are speaking of securing nuclear materials and keeping them out of the hands of terrorists, or steadily reducing the number of nuclear weapons globally, or having the collective vision to embrace the idea of a world without nuclear weapons, and committing to work in a serious and precise way toward that goal, we have much to be thankful for, but much left to do.

Consensus-based FMCT negotiations in the CD are a next logical step in the nuclear disarmament process.

We need to act and to act soon. Much is at stake, for if the CD is left to wither on the vine, it will serve no one’s long term national security interests.

It is time for the CD to get back to work and to make its rightful contribution to international peace and security.

Mr. President, we wish you well as you guide the work of this Conference forward.

Thank you and thank you to all of my colleagues here this morning.