Preface

Speaker: Dr. Kathleen Sullivan
Engaged Democracy for the Nuclear Age

Thank you Mr. Chairman. The non-governmental community would like to express its sincere gratitude to you for your efforts to include the voices of the people at this, the first NPT Review Conference of the new millennium. You and many states parties understand how crucial it is to encourage open dialogue and transparency in nuclear decision making. The global nuclear establishment has long been characterized by a deeply entrenched culture of secrecy; and to this end, participation by citizens and NGOs in the NPT review process, including the opportunity to offer presentations to the delegates, is a vital step forward for disarmament efforts.

There have been some positive developments since the last Review Conference, most notably the 1996 International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion. The court found that pursuant to Article VI of the NPT, states parties to the treaty have an obligation to "pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects". However, the security doctrines of the nuclear weapons states, to this day, continue to re-affirm the absolute and central role of nuclear weapons in current defence policies.

For this reason and others, including the recognition of India and Pakistan as two new members of the nuclear fraternity, there can be no doubt that this Review Conference meets at a time of crisis for the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has recently lamented the "discouraging list of nuclear disarmament measures in suspense, negotiations not initiated and opportunities not taken." Occurring during a time of crisis, this Review Conference presents a unique opportunity and impetus to clear a path for forward movement on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. In short, this Review Conference cannot afford to fail.

The presentations which you are about to hear have been collectively decided upon, and written in a spirit of collaboration and coalition building. As we have done at each of the three PrepComs leading to this meeting, NGOs have identified key issues and have worked collaboratively to contribute the diversity and depth of NGO perspectives.

It is a great privilege to be a part of welcoming our first speaker this afternoon who will be Mr. Iccho Itoh, the Mayor of Nagasaki, Japan. Following his address, you will be hearing a diverse spectrum of views from well-known writers, lawyers and researchers, from grassroots environmental and peace movement campaigners, as well as from indigenous people, retired military leaders, policy planners and former nuclear weapons scientists.

Although arising from various sources and experiences, these views are part of a collective spirit, a united voice of the majority of the world's peoples that calls for:

- the full and complete abolition of nuclear weapons
- the safe and responsible care of radioactive materials
- and the development of an engaged democratic process regarding nuclear decision making.

Thank you for your attention.

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