

(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. KUNIKO INOGUCHI
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Geneva, 31st July 2002

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, Mr. President, let me express my pleasure in seeing you back in full strength after a refreshing one-month break. I would like to reaffirm the intention of my delegation to extend to you our full support and cooperation during your term of office. I would also like to reiterate my appreciation to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference, and the Secretariat of the Conference for their support and assistance at this critical juncture.

The Conference on Disarmament continues to face its stalemate. Our common efforts to bring this impasse to an end must be continued. In his statement during the last plenary meeting, Ambassador Javits of the United States of America encouraged all members to keep a clear focus on this challenge over the break. As he pointed out, an untiring commitment is needed in this regard.

Mr. President,

The Conference has just heard, from Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri of Algeria, the initiative taken by the five distinguished ambassadors.

This initiative provides us with a historic opportunity to begin substantive work on the four key issues of greatest importance to many member States, namely negative security assurances, nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. While willing to actively participate in deliberations on the other three issues, negotiations on an FMCT are of paramount importance to my delegation. Japan believes that an FMCT would contribute significantly to nuclear non-proliferation, and constitute an essential building block for nuclear disarmament. Japan is eager to see the beginning of negotiations on such a treaty – it is something for which we have long been waiting.

A significant feature of this initiative is that it has emerged from a cross-regional group of middle powers strongly interested in disarmament. Such a group is in a better position to identify the collective will of the international community on disarmament, overarching different interests. Of no less importance, however, is the momentum created by the major powers. The May agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on strategic offensive warhead reductions led to a favorable atmosphere in the Conference. In fact, during the second part of the CD, the different positions regarding the program of work of all major countries, including China thanks to their distinguished ambassador, became significantly closer. Disarmament requires a harmonious combination of initiatives from various countries, which can result in significant progress being made. Thus, this initiative is offering a real opportunity for the CD to further narrow the remaining gaps, and to finally achieve a much needed breakthrough.

Another advantage is that this initiative will enable the CD to engage in its exercises in a continuous manner. I highly appreciate the initiative's aim of ensuring the sustainability of the CD's work, at least for the duration of the 2002 and 2003 sessions.

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, Mr. President, let me express my pleasure in seeing you back in full strength after a refreshing one-month break. I would like to reaffirm the intention of my delegation to extend to you our full support and cooperation during your term of office. I would also like to reiterate my appreciation to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference, and the Secretariat of the Conference for their support and assistance at this critical juncture.

The Conference on Disarmament continues to face its stalemate. Our common efforts to bring this impasse to an end must be continued. In his statement during the last plenary meeting, Ambassador Javits of the United States of America encouraged all members to keep a clear focus on this challenge over the break. As he pointed out, an untiring commitment is needed in this regard.

Mr. President,

The Conference has just heard, from Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri of Algeria, the initiative taken by the five distinguished ambassadors.

This initiative provides us with a historic opportunity to begin substantive work on the four key issues of greatest importance to many member States, namely negative security assurances, nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. While willing to actively participate in deliberations on the other three issues, negotiations on an FMCT are of paramount importance to my delegation. Japan believes that an FMCT would contribute significantly to nuclear non-proliferation, and constitute an essential building block for nuclear disarmament. Japan is eager to see the beginning of negotiations on such a treaty – it is something for which we have long been waiting.

A significant feature of this initiative is that it has emerged from a cross-regional group of middle powers strongly interested in disarmament. Such a group is in a better position to identify the collective will of the international community on disarmament, overarching different interests. Of no less importance, however, is the momentum created by the major powers. The May agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on strategic offensive warhead reductions led to a favorable atmosphere in the Conference. In fact, during the second part of the CD, the different positions regarding the program of work of all major countries, including China thanks to their distinguished ambassador, became significantly closer. Disarmament requires a harmonious combination of initiatives from various countries, which can result in significant progress being made. Thus, this initiative is offering a real opportunity for the CD to further narrow the remaining gaps, and to finally achieve a much needed breakthrough.

Another advantage is that this initiative will enable the CD to engage in its exercises in a continuous manner. I highly appreciate the initiative's aim of ensuring the sustainability of the CD's work, at least for the duration of the 2002 and 2003 sessions.

Mr. President,

In addition to this basic appraisal, I would like to contribute three modest suggestions to the initiative for the consideration of all delegations.

Firstly, my delegation understands the general idea on the method of work of the Conference, expressed in the initiative. This idea seems to be self-evident in terms of the history of the CD, which has successfully negotiated disarmament instruments by adopting a method of work based on converging points agreed by all. In this manner, the CD has the full potential to promote international peace and security, respecting the principle of undiminished security for all. To articulate this idea in a text requires careful consideration, however, in order to avoid any unnecessary confusion.

Secondly, with regard to the mandate on an FMCT, my delegation believes that the report of the Special Coordinator, CD/1299, and the mandate contained therein, presents the only realistic approach to start negotiations on a treaty of such significance with unresolved issues remaining as stated in the aforementioned report. The formulation agreed twice, both in 1995 and in 1998, should be regarded in such a manner.

Thirdly, while appreciating the sustainability of the work contained in the initiative, I am also aware that Article 28 of the Rules of Procedure needs to be amended in order to settle this question permanently. My delegation is essentially in support of the idea to amend this article, facilitating the CD's continuation of its substantial work. In view of the differences among all delegations concerning this matter, however, overloading the decision by seeking an amendment of the Rules of Procedure should be avoided. In my view, given the special circumstances under which the CD has been in a stalemate for nearly six years, it would be better for the five ambassadors simply to state that the decision on the program of work on this occasion should be taken notwithstanding Article 28 of the Rules of Procedure.

Mr. President,

My delegation understands that this initiative is still evolving. With this understanding, I would like to assure my full support and express my utmost appreciation to the five ambassadors for their sincere and diligent efforts to bring the current stalemate to an end. Let me remind all of who are present in this room that citizens all over the world are watching us, ardently wishing to see themselves in a safer international environment. In this light, it is imperative that the Conference seizes this present opportunity to respond to their collective wishes by resuming its meaningful work, by promoting international peace and security. Finally, Mr. President, let me reiterate my complete faith in your proven direction to guide toward fulfilling our responsibilities.