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STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. KUNIKO INOBUCHI
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Geneva, 29th August 2002

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I would like to reaffirm, Mr. President, the intention of my delegation to extend its full support and cooperation to you in fulfilling your important task to guide the Conference as it nears the end of its annual session.

Mr. President,

The Conference has just heard, from the distinguished ambassador of Algeria, Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri, the state of play of the five ambassadors' initiative on the program of work. I am pleased to hear that, as a result of their efforts, significant progress has been made in identifying converging points as well as remaining differences. I would like to express, once again, my sincere appreciation for the invaluable commitment of these ambassadors to resolving the current stalemate in the CD. I would also like to reiterate the full support of my delegation for their efforts, while acknowledging that the proposal just presented will remain flexible to accommodate any outstanding concerns. The circulated non-paper contains some significant merits, including its way to give a certain potentiality to the implementation of the program of work, whilst avoiding any prejudgement on the points where member States still disagree. I believe that this text provides one of the most realistic approaches to the program of work and sincerely hope that it will continue to be the focus of serious attention by all delegations during the intersessional break.

Mr. President,

Despite the important efforts made by the five ambassadors, it is nevertheless true that the Conference is drawing to the end of this year's annual session, again without agreeing on a program of work. This will be the fourth consecutive year in which the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, has been unable to engage in any substantive work based on an agreed program of work. This is a truly dismaying fact, which reaffirms the reality that the Conference cannot solve its problem in isolation from the international environment.

The Conference is in a dilemma between the role it has been given to play and the international environment which inhibits it from effectively carrying out this role. All member States must make a greater effort not only in Geneva, but also in their respective capitals.

For all of us here in Geneva it is most important, as we find ourselves at the conclusion of this year's session, to reflect on this past year. The Conference must, above all, be fully accountable to the world for its current status following all its deliberations of this year. It cannot simply say that it has failed. Instead, it must explain what has been done to *solve* the problem and *how* it has failed. Collective reflections by the Conference as a body, not individual reflections, will also enable the Conference to contemplate on what must be done to resolve this problem in the future. In addition, these collective accounts will provide a basis on which capitals can work, in order to create a more favourable environment for the Conference.

Let me share my thoughts on such reflections.

Firstly, there continues to exist a strong common interest in commencing substantive work under an agreed program of work as early as possible. Such an interest has been shown by certain countries in particular, through their submission of working papers on specific issues, to be addressed under the future agreed program of work.

Secondly, serious efforts have been made by the successive Presidents to accelerate agreement on a program of work. The Amorim formulation, CD/1624, has been a basis for consultations throughout this year's annual session. A number of delegations, including my own, explicitly mentioned in plenary statements their readiness to accept this formulation as it stands. Some delegations are, however, not yet in a position to do so, and one such delegation presented a specific wording proposal based on the Amorim formulation. More clarifications are required on the nature of the substantive work that is envisaged under this formulation on nuclear disarmament and outer space.

Thirdly, the five ambassadors took a serious initiative to reach a consensus program of work, building on all past efforts, including the Amorim

proposal. Apart from the content of their proposal, which is still evolving, the approach being taken by those ambassadors is of historical significance as the first attempt to represent a cross-group interest in the urgent need to start substantive work under a program of work. In other words it has launched a process for the co-creation of an agreeable program of work by making available a draft on which all delegations can present their views and comments.

Fourthly, despite a common interest and serious efforts being made, the Conference has been unable to reach consensus. In this regard, it should be noted that a majority of member States give more priority to the urgent need to agree on a program of work. They accept not to address their individual concerns and interests now but are prepared to do so through the substantive work to be started. On the other hand, some States are more interested in addressing their interests in the deliberations on the program of work rather than later. Clearly, these States who have strong positions that result in disagreement on certain issues must make more efforts to eliminate their differences.

Finally, the signing of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions between the Russian Federation and the United States of America may, while difficult to estimate at this time to what degree, have had some impact on the CD. Nonetheless, all States, including major military powers, should be encouraged to enhance mutual relationships to create a more favourable environment for the CD.

Mr. President,

You have the important task of guiding the Conference towards adopting this year's annual report of the Conference to the General Assembly of the United Nations. This report drafting that we are going to commence is not just a procedural matter, but, more importantly, it is the only way, at this difficult juncture, for the Conference to remain responsible in relation to its function and relevant to future international peace and security. I am confident, Mr. President, that the Conference will be guided under your skilful chairmanship to reach a reasonable outcome in this regard.

Thank you.