

REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE OFFICE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS AT GENEVA



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**Statement by H.E. Krzysztof Jakubowski
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Poland
to the Conference on Disarmament**

Geneva, 24 June 2004

Mr. President,

As I take the floor at the first plenary meeting under your Presidency, let me congratulate you on the assumption of this high office and let me wish you all the success in fulfilling your responsibilities as the President of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues,

The time has come to say "farewell" to you when after 7 years of my troubling you I am leaving Geneva. Certainly after such a long time spent in one place a man becomes emotional when it's his time to leave has arrived. It is also the time to sum-up and draw conclusions for me.

Let me say that my term of duty as the Ambassador of Poland took place in extraordinary time. During my stay here Poland joined NATO and, most recently, the European Union – events that set new horizons for my work. On the other hand, during my stay here, the tragic events of the September 11 took place, which highlighted the need to think about international security in a new perspective. Those are just few examples of what happened during those 7 years, but they show perfectly that the new reality in international security has been born. It is still taking shape, as everyday we can see new developments of the key importance to the global and regional peace and security.

Some people may say that it wasn't the time rich with developments in the Conference on Disarmament. I think just the opposite. Although we could not agree on the programme of work, the Conference worked. And worked substantially. It is pretty clear that it is not easy to reach agreements in the time of big changes. But at the same time, the Conference served as a platform for exchanging views, informing about national positions, broadening mutual understanding. It was a perfect confidence-building measure of its own.

In my speech on February 22 I outlined my delegation's position on the Programme of Work, the agenda – and more generally on the need of innovative thinking about the substance and organisation of work of the Conference. The ideas which I have put forward then are still valid and I am not going to repeat them. Let me just repeat that the role of the CD remains valid. It is even more so, because of the new challenges we face, especially terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Those new challenges for international security should be reflected in CD deliberations and work. The new, innovative thinking is needed. New vision.

Leonardo da Vinci – great artist, constructor and master of innovative thinking – once said: “It is easier to oppose the beginning than the end”. It is my true hope that the Conference on Disarmament will make a great progress once it is able to make the start. The adoption of the programme of work would be a pole position. Probably it would be easier if we would treat the programme as “a schedule of activities” or “road map”. Nevertheless, I think it is important to start and prove that the Conference on Disarmament is not only on paper a sole multilateral negotiating body in disarmament area. But that it also can be productive and effective.

Great Leonardo also said: “Vacuum is being born where the hope dies”. I appeal to you – don’t let the hope vanish. Keep in mind that vacuum may be infected with things that we do not wish to get around with – mistrust and havoc for example. I have a strong hope that the Conference on Disarmament – thanks to your skills and innovative thinking – will remain the most important multilateral body in disarmament, well adjusted to the new challenges.

Mr. President, Dear Colleagues,

It was a real privilege to be the part of the “best club in town”. I wish to thank you for your friendship. I appreciate that I had an opportunity to work in this room with the most skilful and talented diplomats. I wish to thank the Secretariat – especially Secretary General of the CD Mr. Sergei Ordzhoniokidze, Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and their staff for the constant support and co-operation. Last but not least, I wish to thank conference services and interpreters for their patience and for making our work possible.

Thank you.