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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. SUMIO TARUI  
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN  
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Geneva, 24 June 2008

Since I am taking the floor for the first time under your Presidency, I would like to express my congratulations to you, Ambassador Rocca, on your assumption of the high post of President of the Conference on Disarmament.

Madame President,

Before I deliver my country's statement on the Draft Decision on a programme of work (CD/1840), I would just like to add to the comments made by my Australian colleague, Ambassador Millar, on the initiative of the international commission on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Madame President,

On 12 June, the Prime Minister of Japan, Yasuo Fukuda, and the Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, released a joint statement to reaffirm the particular importance of the Japan-Australia relationship, and to strengthen further the comprehensive and strategic partnership between the two countries. In the joint statement, both leaders renewed their determination to strengthen the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. What's more, Japan welcomed Prime Minister Rudd's proposal on 9 June in Kyoto of establishing an international commission on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Japan and Australia are bilaterally consulting on the specific terms of cooperation for this commission, and we hope that it will contribute to reinforcing the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime in the lead up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Turning now to the issue of CD/1840, Madame President, my delegation highly commends the dedicated efforts of this year's six Presidents, based on the achievements of the past two years, to return the CD back to substantive work. In this vein, we fully support the President's approach of continuing consultations with the Member States that still have concerns over the Draft Decision on a programme of work. You can rely on Japan's fullest cooperation.

Madame President,

It is to be acknowledged that CD/1840 is a well-balanced compromise, as was the package proposal L.1. In addition, CD/1840, building upon the package proposal, addresses the specific concerns that have been expressed by delegations. Japan can accept the adjustment made to the L.1 package and supports the adoption of CD/1840.

Madame President,

In regards to an FMCT, Japan would like to re-emphasize that no delegation has expressed opposition to negotiations on the prohibition of production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, notwithstanding differences over the modality and the scope of such negotiations. While stating the clear objective of negotiating a ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons purposes, CD/1840 does not in anyway prejudice the outcome of negotiations. In other words, the Draft Decision provides a framework for negotiations without preconditions. Thus, as for what should constitute the "modality and the scope of negotiations", for instance whether and how to include verification and stocks, CD/1840 allows each Member State to freely pursue their respective positions and priorities, and to submit proposals on any issue they deem relevant in the course of negotiations.

Madame President,

For advancement in disarmament, the discussions in each field should progress independently and on its own merit, and logically it is inappropriate to hold back potential progress in one area just because of slower progress in others. Having said this, CD/1840 is comprehensive and balanced, since it allows substantive discussions on the other three core agenda items, with a view to enabling future compromise(s) and agreement(s) and including the possibility of future negotiations under any agenda item. Therefore, we fail to find a reason against accepting CD/1840 and recommencing the substantive work of the Conference based on this Draft Decision.

Lastly, Madame President, Japan believes that it is indisputable that the Conference on Disarmament will contribute to the improvement of international security by fulfilling its role as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. By continuing the deadlock in the CD, we perpetuate the ongoing crisis in the international security environment created by our own failure to act. We must therefore have a stronger sense of alarm at this precarious situation. I implore all the CD Member States to act now with the utmost urgency.

I thank you Madame President.