

**LETTER DATED 23 MARCH 2004 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
JAPAN TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF  
THE STATEMENT GIVEN AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE  
PROGRAMME OF WORK ON 19 DECEMBER 2003 IN GENEVA**

I have the honour to transmit the text of my statement as President of the Conference on Disarmament at the Open-Ended Consultations on the Programme of Work of the Conference on Disarmament on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

I should be grateful if the statement could be issued and circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

*(Signed):*

Kuniko INOBUCHI, Ph.D.  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Japan  
to the Conference on Disarmament

**Statement by Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan,  
President of the Conference on Disarmament  
at the Open-Ended Consultations on the Programme of Work  
of the Conference on Disarmament  
19 December 2003**

At the outset, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to all delegations for the support and cooperation that has been extended to me. I have decided to hold this meeting, although the timing may not necessarily be the most desirable, because it is my duty as president, to fulfill my task in accordance with the enhanced mandate provided in the Report of the Conference. I believe that the most effective way to do this is to share my analysis on the current status of the Conference with all member States, as well as to submit a few suggestions which I hope will be useful to my successor, Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya, and to all other delegations, as they consider the most efficient manner to initiate next year's session so that the Conference is able to commence its substantive work at an early stage.

(Current Status)

Firstly, let me explain the current status of my consultations. Since the end of the annual session, my first important task has been to present the Report of the Conference to the First Committee of the General Assembly, and to submit a resolution on the CD Report for consensus adoption. During my consultations on the resolution, while I detected strong interest among countries in seeking agreement on a programme of work on the basis of the five-ambassador proposal, some delegations continued to reserve their positions. Therefore the situation was not ready for the resolution of the General Assembly to indicate a clear message on the programme of work. The resolution, however, stressed the urgent need for the Conference to commence substantive work during its 2004 annual session. I believe that this resolution manifests the willingness of all States to enhance the collective interest by bringing the Conference back to work.

I have continued to consult with delegations since the First Committee. The consultations have yet to materialize into any clear picture on the issue of the program of work. Basically, the current situation is, as described in the Report in a rather detailed manner, that most of the member States support, or accept, the five-ambassador proposal, while some delegations continue to reserve their positions. At this juncture, therefore, there has not been any visible progress made. However, it is inevitable that the Conference will face a critical moment to determine where it will head for. Such current situation has focused member States to review their respective positions seriously and energetically on the key issues in the current proposal. I would like to take this opportunity, as president, to offer some suggestions to pave the way toward the beginning of next year's annual session.

(Presidential Suggestions)

Firstly, the five-ambassador proposal enjoys wide, cross-group support or acceptance because it is a more or less acceptable reflection of the interests and priorities of those countries supporting or accepting this proposal. In order to allow the Conference to collectively engage in substantive

work, this situation should be acknowledged by all delegations, especially by those countries which continue to reserve their positions.

Secondly, as the Report mentions, there have been discussions on the linkage approach or the comprehensive approach, with respect to the issue of the program of work. The former implies undue restrictions on the work of the CD, and therefore should be denied, whereas the latter is a legitimate idea to accommodate various security and arms control interests in the international community. It is important to ensure institutionally that the CD will work as a comprehensive response to the current international security situation while preventing linkage tactics from further complicating the work of the CD, including its substantive work in the individual ad hoc committees. In this regard I strongly believe that the decisions on the mandates should be made separately, not in a package form. It is worthwhile to repeat that the normal practice until 1998 when we had the last programme of work in the recent years was separate decisions.

Thirdly, allow me to elaborate my comments on each of the four core issues.

- (1) As evidently shown by the consensus General Assembly resolution on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, there is a full recognition on the need to commence negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
- (2) With respect to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, because of the constructive effort witnessed toward the end of this year's annual session, an appropriate option to allow the Conference to commence meaningful discussions on this issue is emerging.
- (3) The establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament has consistently been the priority of one group in the CD. After years of consultations, despite the differences among groups and countries, the discussion on nuclear disarmament has now become a realistic option for the Conference.
- (4) Negative security assurance is a complex issue in terms of its substance. Negotiations in 1998 failed to lead the Conference to any meaningful solution. In other words, the mandate on this issue was not capable of engaging the Conference in a successful exercise at that time. Whether the same situation is still persisting remains to be answered. It is, however, also appropriate for us to be open to the possibility of reviewing this mandate in order to engage in a promising exercise, not one doomed to failure.

Finally, there is growing concern over new threats, particularly those related to the risk that terrorists may obtain weapons of mass destruction. At the First Committee, many delegations referred to these problems. It is not the traditional task of the Conference to focus on terrorism. However, in the context of an evolving security environment, it is appropriate for the Conference to address new problems that are of widespread concern. Also, consideration should be given to new concerns in the context of substantive exercises on the traditional issues.

In conclusion, the remaining gaps are significantly narrower than a year ago thanks to all past efforts to seek a convergence of positions. However, we probably need more clarity on the nature, substance, etc. of the work in which we are going to engage, in order to initiate a

promising process for the next years. I am confident that the reviews and reflections currently underway in the respective capitals of member States on their positions will be extremely useful to our efforts to be made early next year to bridge the remaining gaps.

Now I would like to open the floor to hear the views of delegations on the current status of the CD, as well as on my suggestions, or to hear any comment you may wish to make at this stage.

(Closing)

I thank you very much for all your contributions made today. I do not intend to sum up the discussion but I hope that the overall picture of the Conference which we all have obtained from today's debate will bring us into the new year well prepared to confront the critical juncture that awaits us. I would also like to stress, as president passing the torch from the successive Western presidents to the G21 presidents, that such cross-group effort by the successive presidents must prove the effective functioning of multilateral diplomacy which is after all the fundamental guarantee for the international peace and security.

Before concluding, once again I thank all delegations present today for their active participation. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Roman-Morey, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and other members of the Secretariat as well as the interpreters, not only for enabling us to conduct our business today but also for supporting the presidency and the entire Conference throughout the year.

I wish you all pleasant holidays, a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The meeting is closed.

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