



DELEGATION OF JAPAN TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FAREWELL STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. AKIO SUDA
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Geneva, 15 September 2011

Mr. President

During my tenure in Geneva, which covered three summers and two winters, I was privileged to have a close working relationship with all delegates and colleagues, including those who left before me. I thank you for the friendship and generosity that you have shown to me and my delegation wherever we assumed our tasks, whether that was in Geneva, New York or other places.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express once again our heartfelt gratitude, on behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, for the words of sympathy and encouragement as well as the relief teams and aid that you, your Governments and your people sent to Japan after the unprecedented disasters of the earthquake and tsunami which attacked the northeast Tohoku District of Japan on March 11 this year. The warm words from all over the world pointed to one message: that was "the world is with you". The message greatly helped console those people who directly suffered from the disasters and the whole of Japan. Surely it would require a long time and cumulative efforts for Japan to accomplish its recovery and reconstruction. However, thanks to the support and encouragement of the people of the world, I am pleased to report to you that Japan has been making a steady and strong move forwards to overcome this historic challenge, including significant progress in stabilizing the troubled nuclear power plants in Fukushima.

Mr. President

I joined my colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament in early June 2009, right after the adoption of the Program of Work, CD/1864. This means that I did not contribute to the remarkable accomplishment of the CD in May 2009 at all and that I fully share the collective responsibility of the CD for its failure to implement its own Program of Work for the remainder of that year and its inability to start any substantive work in the following two years up to now.

Several delegates attribute the reason for our stalemate to "the lack of political will of member states" and not to our way of dealing with the CD's function. I don't understand this argument. It sounds like we are saying that we are not wrong, that our rules of procedure and its practices are not wrong, that the CD itself is not wrong, and that we are just unlucky to be working in the midst of a period that is

lacking in political will on disarmament. How disappointing this argument would appear to the present world outside the CD, where people and many political leaders stress more than ever the importance of making progress in disarmament, particularly in nuclear disarmament. Looking only at our efforts in the CD, how can we deny the surge of collective political will of member states when it adopted CD/1864 by consensus? How can we begin to doubt such political will of so many states simply because one member state came to openly demonstrate its reluctance to participate in the substantive work?

Mr. President

My delegation has several times pointed out the necessity to study and review our practice of applying the rules of procedures, particularly the consensus rule. In my view, for instance, delegates should refrain from resorting to the consensus rule in usual procedural matters. Also, when a delegate is to oppose a consensus decision on substance, such a delegate should be required to present their reasons and these reasons need to be relevant to the issue. It would be nice if the CD starts discussing these matters, as was suggested by Colombia, in next year's session.

In 2009, the CD ended up with a contradictory result between consensus and the consensus rule. The significant decision made by consensus was blocked by the application of the consensus rule to usual procedural matters. The consensus rule betrayed the consensus. There is apparently something wrong with the way in which we applied the rule at that time.

In 2010 and 2011, however, what we could not achieve was a consensus on substance, an agreement on Program of Work itself. It was a clear setback from 2009. We asked ourselves whether we could achieve consensus on a Program of Work more or less close to CD/1864. The answer was "no", because at least one member kept its position against such a Program of Work.

In the course of our struggle over a Program of Work in 2010 and 2011, some delegates began to stress that while they could still support a POW based on CD/1864, they considered the issue of nuclear disarmament, including a nuclear weapons convention, the most important among the four core issues. Certainly, each member state has a different view of which issues it considers to be more important

than the others, and there is no problem for any delegate to express such views. Nevertheless, I am afraid that those statements, if carelessly repeated, might have the unintended effect of diverting our interest from the mandated actual work of the CD to the mere exchange of political views.

Mr. President

I understand the earnest hope of delegates that the CD could work more on the grand plan of the abolishment of nuclear weapons. Japan, no less than any other country, is earnest in seeking for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That is why Japan submits every year a UN resolution on the total elimination of these weapons. That is why Japan together with Australia launched the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, which produced in November 2009 a significant report on comprehensive and concrete steps towards the abolition of nuclear weapons.

I have listened carefully to several statements by my respectable colleagues explaining their ideas about a nuclear weapons convention. In my understanding such a convention as it is envisaged consists of many elements and steps, including a complete test-ban, a prohibition of fissile material for nuclear weapons, negative security assurances, a reduction and elimination of stocks of fissile materials, steps on nuclear doctrine and force posture, and so forth.

Fine, I believe all the delegates are more or less ready to discuss total nuclear disarmament under agenda item 1 of a Program of Work since we had already once adopted CD/1864. The only thing is that it is not realistic to expect all the CD members to agree to the negotiation of such a comprehensive convention for now.

Then what we can and should do in the CD is that while we start discussions on the issue of "nuclear disarmament", which includes many elements, we also start the negotiation of a specific treaty which is an essential element of nuclear disarmament and mature enough for negotiations. The maturity of issues can be proved by the readiness of most of the member states to start negotiations together with non existence of obstruction by any. Obviously an FMCT is the issue before us for immediate negotiation.

Therefore, the immediate start of negotiations on an FMCT goes along with the position of those delegates who consider item 1 "nuclear disarmament" the most important because FMCT is an indispensable part of any envisaged grand plan for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We are in this chamber to discuss and actually negotiate treaties on disarmament which have become ready for negotiations. For that, we need to have a practical program to actually work on important core issues taking into account the maturity of issues for negotiations. This is exactly what CD/1864 offered to us, a well balanced and practical treatment of the four core issues for productive work in the CD. I believe that CD/1864 definitely remains valid for the future work of the Conference.

Some days ago, one of our colleagues said to me jokingly that we, the CD delegates, might have forgotten how to negotiate a treaty since it is a long time ago that the CD conducted actual negotiations and people here have changed many times. I am afraid that it may not be a joke. Many of the delegates to the CD also work for the UNGA's First Committee as well as the NPT review process and contribute to producing some meaningful documents through active discussions. We can recall how hard we worked together to achieve agreement on the Final Document at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. For many years, our work in these forums proved to be more rewarding than our work in the CD. But these forums, where we work better, are places for political statements and debates, through which we try to produce agreed documents of a political nature. They differ by nature from the Conference on Disarmament whose role is to punch out, through discussions and negotiations, legally binding documents, treaties.

After the long-lasting stagnation, however, it may not be so surprising if we have become more accustomed to statements and discussions made not for our collective work of disarmament but for the interest of individual countries or groups. There are other forums appropriate for those political statements and discussions. The CD is not one of them.

When I came to Geneva this time, I was surprised by my many discoveries here, such as a bicycle running in the centre of a driving road. But a bigger surprise in the Palais des Nation was the existence of the so called regional groups and the

frequency of their meetings. I wondered if I had time-slipped into the 1970s. To my further surprise, the role, size and constituents of the four groups amazingly differ from one another. Some groups meet mainly for the exchange of information and consultation. Another goes further and seeks common positions and joint statements. Another is just a group of one. Constituents of the three main groups are a mixture of non-nuclear weapon states and nuclear-weapon states or nuclear possessing states.

It is free and sometimes quite useful for members to have informal consultations and exchanges of views and information. But needless to say, the CD is a forum consisting of 65 member states and not of any groups of countries, and no less importantly, the CD is a forum for the multilateral negotiation of treaties and not for political debates or confrontation. It is wrong therefore for the CD to expect any significant role to be played by groups. There is a danger of the CD becoming a political showcase if our discussions and cooperation are excessively handled under the name of regional groups or any other groups.

It is the time for all the member states and delegates to work together, not solely for the interests of individual countries or groups, but for our collective interests in disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and regain the reputation of this body as a conference for creating multilateral treaties on disarmament.

Mr. President

Allow me to conclude by expressing my deep gratitude to you, Ambassador Rodriguez, for your leadership and charming smile that enabled us to conclude this year's session with the correct report to the UNGA. My sincere thanks also go to the preceding five Presidents of this year. I would also like to express my profound gratitude to the Secretary General of the Conference, H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev for his strong support and guidance to the CD and its delegations. And I should express my personal, special thanks to Mr. Jarmo Sareva and all officers of the Secretariat for their dedicated work and support.

In the late 16th century, when all the lands of Japan were contested by warriors, three great warlords emerged and ruled Japan successively. First there was Nobunaga, a rigorous genius of war, then Hideyoshi, a workaholic peasant up-start,

and third there was Ieyasu, a politician of good patience. There is a famous anecdote that sharply characterizes the personalities of the three. As the story goes, there was a little cuckoo with a beautiful voice, but one day the bird forgot how to sing. When the three lords were asked what they would do with this bird, Nobunaga said that he would kill her immediately. Hideyoshi said that he would do everything to make her sing. And finally Ieyasu said that he would just wait until she sang again someday. I hope that all our colleagues will follow Hideyoshi's policy and make the CD sing again soon.

Thank you very much