

Ambassador Christina Rocca
Permanent Representative of the United States of America
August 14, 2008

Mr. Secretary General, Distinguished Colleagues –

It has been a privilege to serve as the President of this Conference through these past months.

The active participation of delegations in our meetings, and in particular in the renewed round of informal meetings under our very able coordinators, has been welcome. The informal discussions in particular helped refresh our conversation on the important issues before us, and will aid in drawing our collective conclusions on the work of the Conference this year.

It is with regret that I must note that the enhanced exchange of views afforded by our informal meetings have, so far, failed to reach the third and I believe most important of their aims, to reach consensus on our program of work. This is all the more perplexing, as our discussions underscored the common understanding of the CD's purpose, and the importance of substantive work on our four core issues, including the prompt commencement of negotiations on an FMCT. National statements in the plenary sessions in recent weeks continued to show strong support for the program of work proposed by the Presidency, CD/1840, and I wish to acknowledge the strong basis for that proposal in the efforts of the 2006 and 2007 Presidencies.

I would like to thank the Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, his deputy, and the entire Secretariat for their unfailing support to us during our time as President, and express especial gratitude to the interpreters for their unstinting efforts.

After our meeting today, I will be yielding the chair to our Venezuelan colleagues, and I would like to welcome Ambassador German Mundarain Hernandez to the Conference on Disarmament, and assure him of our full support, and I am certain that of the entire P6 group of Presidents, in carrying out his duties. Under his leadership, we look forward to agreement on a strong and substantive report of the Conference's work this year to the UN General Assembly.