Statement
by

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to the Conference on Disarmament

at the General Debate in the First Committee
57th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

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Please Check Against Delivery
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first of all to express my delegation's congratulations to you on your unanimous election to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. Let me also avail of this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thoughtful and incisive statement on various disarmament and international security issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The First Committee is meeting at a challenging and difficult time. While there have been some positive developments, we are in fact witnessing the weakening of the basic disarmament infra-structure and a crisis in multilateral disarmament endeavors.

My delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of negotiations between the Russian Federation and the U.S. that led to the signing of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms Reductions. As an important milestone in limiting nuclear armaments, it has mandated a reduction of deployed nuclear weapons to between 1700 to 2200 over the next decade and has provided a new foundation for strategic relations between them. It is our expectation that they will continue their efforts towards the elimination of nuclear arsenals.

It is also gratifying to note that total global arms sales are at their lowest since 1997. Many developing countries have curtailed their expenditures on weapons which can be utilized for socio-economic development.

The number of signatures and ratifications for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has continued to increase. Likewise, we note the advances made with regard to the elimination of chemical weapons along with an increase in the number of ratifications for the Convention.

Our commendation goes to Cuba for its decision to adhere to the NPT and thereby further strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Equally notable is the agreement on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia demonstrating an irreversible trend towards a nuclear-free world.
However, in the effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons, the picture is hardly encouraging. There is growing concern at the slow pace of progress in achieving the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. The situation has been further compounded by the updating of strategic doctrines which set out new rationales for the permanent retention of these weapons, a new generation of such weapons and the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons. My delegation has also noted with regret the unilateral abrogation of the ABM Treaty; plans for national missile defense and the prospects of an arms race in outer space. These negative developments have led to a new, more disturbing strategic context.

Underlying these crises, there has been no serious implementation of the commitments undertaken to achieve disarmament objectives. Meanwhile, we have witnessed the growing trend to undermine multilateralism and multilateral legal commitments. Divergent strategic interests have contributed to the grave set-back in disarmament efforts, including deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament, which has failed so far to agree on its program of work.

The consequences of failing to address these issues in their broader and deeper dimensions would be dangerous and counter-productive. Our ability and willingness to maintain the current arms control regimes will suffer gravely. And the prospects for credible disarmament agreements in the future will be drastically diminished.

Hence, the “unequivocal undertaking” of the 2000 NPT Review Conference needs to be demonstrated without delay through an accelerated process of negotiations and the full implementation of the 13 “practical steps” to advance systematically and progressively towards a nuclear-weapons-free world. For Indonesia, their implementation are the criteria to determine progress in fulfilling nuclear disarmament obligations and must be based upon genuine disarmament which require codification, transparency, accountability and verification. In particular, the reduction of operational strategic systems which pose the most imminent danger will provide hope for progress, in reducing, if not eliminating, nuclear dangers; the irreversibility of dismantled nuclear weapons should be an integral part of the disarmament process; and diminishing the future role of these weapons in security to minimize the risk of their use. These can be bolstered by unilateral measures which can lead to new frontiers for arms limitation by reinforcing bilateral agreements and fewer arsenals; cuts in non-strategic nuclear weapons and limits on weaponization, that would reflect restraint, enhance confidence and contribute to the objective of achieving the total abolition of nuclear armaments.

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Mr. Chairman,

The problem of controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction has emerged to be more important today than at any time in the nuclear age. The rising specter of these weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, being acquired and used by non-state actors is of concern to us all. They pose a particular danger to international stability which no nation can deal with unilaterally.

In this context, the early adoption of an international convention for the suppression of nuclear terrorism which has been under consideration by the General Assembly would be an important first step towards eliminating this threat. It should contain provisions to safeguard nuclear materials, the establishment of international controls of all fissile materials that could be used to make new nuclear weapons and an internationally agreed standards for all types of nuclear exports and imports. Such a convention will add significantly to the existing legal norms such as the Vienna Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials.

As regards the Bangkok Treaty, states parties have meant it to be their contribution to the strengthening of security and to the maintenance of world peace and stability. As in the case of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba Treaties, the Bangkok Treaty could become effective only with the participation of all nuclear weapon states. ASEAN has been negotiating with them the terms of the Protocol to become an integral part of the Treaty. Some of the nuclear weapon states, however, continue to have some concerns that remain unresolved. Negotiations are continuing and hopefully the nuclear powers will ratify the Protocol in the foreseeable future so that the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone will become fully operable.

In the first effort by the United Nations to address the question of missiles in all its aspects, the report of a study by the Group of Governmental Experts has illuminated our understanding by discussing, inter alia, existing situation and trends, past precedents, and missiles being the delivery means of choice of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons and of many conventional weapons with implications at both regional and global levels. It has also acknowledged the right of states to use space technology for peaceful purposes.

The report has noted the lack of universally accepted norms or instruments to deal specifically with missile-related concerns. This anomaly has been addressed in part by the proposed Global Control System and the draft International Code of Conduct focusing primarily on the key issue of stemming missile proliferation and
related technologies. They reflect response to the dangers posed by weapons of mass
destruction and their means of delivery.

However, the lacunae in the non-proliferation regimes have made us realize the
need to take a collective look at this issue and explore other modalities to combat the
danger of missile proliferation. Multilateral initiatives under United Nations auspices
for a comprehensive and non-discriminatory legal regime will address not only
proliferation concerns and questions relating to dual use technology, but also adopt a
phased approach to reduce and eliminate both offensive and defensive missiles. The
international community now has an unprecedented opportunity to seek a responsible
outcome by building further on the report of the Group of Experts.

Of the numerous global problems requiring multilateral response, few can be as
obvious as disarmament. In view of the deadlock that has persisted in our endeavors,
we believe that the time has come to convene the fourth special session of the
General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). It is now nearly a decade and
a half since SSOD III was convened. It is also pertinent to recall that the Disarmament
Commission has considered this question exhaustively during an unprecedented four
consecutive years and identified the essential elements for further elaboration. This
reflects the importance that an overwhelming majority of states attach to its convening.
My delegation is, therefore, hopeful that SSOD IV can be convened so that we can
build on our past achievements and come to grips with a myriad of issues that have for
so long eluded a consensus.

My delegation wishes to inform member states that a seminar in Bali will be
held in February 2003 to consider the implementation, at the regional level, of the
Program of Action adopted by the 2001 United Nations Conference on Small Arms and
Light Weapons. Concurrently, this forum will also hold a Workshop on Transparency in
Armaments.

Before concluding, my delegation wishes to commend the Regional Center for
Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its contributions in facilitating the
exploration of new vistas, delineating areas for negotiations and agreements and
thereby strengthening the prospects for disarmament. For these reasons, it is essential
that the activities of the Center be continued.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.