Statement to the First Committee

on behalf of the

New Agenda Coalition
[Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa & Sweden]

Delivered by
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Monday 30th September, 2002
Statement to the First Committee
on behalf of the
New Agenda Coalition

30th September 2002

Mr. Chairman,

I am honoured to make a contribution to the general debate on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, partners of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC). I will, at the same time, give the Committee an overview of the agreed NAC position on a number of issues which are detailed in the two draft resolutions being circulated by us at this session.

The first of these, entitled “Towards a nuclear weapon free world: the need for a new agenda”, builds on the previous efforts of the New Agenda Coalition, including at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and at last April’s Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 Review Conference. As such, it represents a NAC contribution to the ongoing Review process and to the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

It is the firm belief of the NAC Partners that the horrific events which took place only one year ago in this city have opened our eyes to the importance of the multilateral approach. The terrorist attacks and the possibility that their perpetrators could make use of weapons of mass destruction have highlighted the importance of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. These attacks have been nothing less than a wake-up call for our age. It is time to take the necessary collective action in relation to nuclear disarmament.

In 1995, the NPT States Parties renewed their commitment to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective nuclear disarmament measures. By the time we reach the NPT Review Conference of 2005 a full decade will have passed. One hopes, even at this late stage, that the NPT parties will have positive progress to review by the time the Conference starts. The undertakings made by States Parties at the year 2000 NPT Review Conference have mapped out the practical steps through which such progress can be achieved. The ongoing NPT Preparatory Committee process provides a
facilitating framework. We, as an international community, must take the agreed practical steps. We must actively reinforce our collective security in a spirit of mutuality. Our continued indecision leaves us as vulnerable to a nuclear event as at any previous time in our history.

The first NAC draft resolution represents a timely opportunity to consolidate and to enhance the contribution that negotiated treaties can continue to make to international nuclear security. We have already fallen behind in this endeavour. Now is the time to reinvigorate the wider nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation debate so as to respond with tangible results. We welcome the fact that Cuba has announced its intention to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Without rehearsing the entire content of the initial NAC resolution I urge like-minded States to join us in,

• calling upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish an *ad hoc* committee to deal specifically with nuclear disarmament,

• wishing to see the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed and ratified to enter into force as soon as possible with confirmation of the moratorium on all test explosions,

• expressing our deep concern about the continued retention of the nuclear weapons option by the three States who have not yet acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and calling on them to do so and bring into force full-scope IAEA safeguards,

• seeking the resumption of negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives,

• wanting to prevent an arms race taking place in outer space and calling on the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an *ad hoc* committee to deal with this issue,
• calling on nuclear-weapon States to respect fully their existing commitments with regard to security assurances and for recommendations on this issue to be made to the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Emerging approaches to the broader role of nuclear weapons, including the development of new types of nuclear weapons and new rationalisations for their use, give urgency to our concerns. There is an accumulation of nuclear risk. There is a disturbing trend of convergence between the possible deployment of tactical nuclear weapons and conventional ones. This trend is among the many horizontal and vertical pressures which are extending the range of nuclear and related threats which we as a world community face.

In an effort to highlight and pro-actively anticipate the particular threat posed by tactical nuclear weapons, we as NAC partners have addressed our concerns in a second draft resolution for this year’s session. This includes,

• a call for the reduction of Tactical Nuclear Weapons to be given priority and carried out in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

• a call to further reduce the operational status of Tactical Nuclear Weapons so that the likelihood of their use is made more remote.

Mr. Chairman,

The NAC Group strongly contends that it is no longer tenable to leave our internationally agreed nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation action strategies in open-ended abeyance. The two resolutions we are putting forward can act as a catalyst for meaningful progress and concrete action. They have the necessary operational flexibility to meet the concerns of all like-minded States. By way of a positive outcome to this session’s debate, we invite like-minded States to support our draft resolutions in a spirit of shared global concern.

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