BRAZIL

STATEMENT BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you – and through you the other members of the bureau – on your election as Chairman of this year’s session of the First Committee of the General Assembly. Accept our best wishes and the assurances of the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation. I wish also to congratulate Ambassador André Erdos who conducted this Committee in 2001.

A word of recognition also goes to Under-Secretary General Jayantha Dhanapala and his team at the Department of Disarmament Affairs, for their continued demonstration of professionalism and valuable support for the cause of disarmament.

My delegation associates itself to the statements by the New Agenda Coalition and the Rio Group.

Mr. Chairman,

The First Committee opens its work in a moment when security concerns are dominant in the international agenda, as they have not been in decades.

Disturbing signs of an increasing lack of interest in some quarters towards progress in the disarmament field within the multilateral framework still persist. We are concerned about a tendency to avoid the multilateral approach and to deal unilaterally or plurilaterally with what is, by essence, universal. Issues relating to international security affect all countries and require collective responses.

Given the need for stability and predictability, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are more appropriately dealt with multilaterally and in a treaty-based framework. Internationally negotiated multilateral treaties in the field of disarmament have made, and will continue to make, fundamental contributions to international peace and security.

It is imperative that commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation already agreed upon by States be implemented in full. We must pursue the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

The terrorism threats have highlighted the importance of the total elimination of such weapons. The discussion of measures to countenance the possible use of such weapons by terrorists should not result, however, in any justification for their indefinite retention.

We firmly believe that strengthening the non-proliferation regime does not by itself preclude the need for disarmament measures leading to the complete
elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The supply-side control of key technologies associated with the development of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is an important tool for combating their spread. Nonetheless non-proliferation alone is not a solution to our common security concerns. Without effective, verifiable and irreversible progress in the field of disarmament, there can be little – if any - sustainable results of non-proliferation regimes.

Mr. Chairman,

The continued paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament is an eloquent example of disengagement of key States and lack of political will needed to move forward. A paralyzed CD is to no one's benefit. For the fourth consecutive year we could not reach consensus on a program of work. Although convinced that the "Amorim Proposal" constitutes the best approach to reach a consensus on the program of work, Brazil is prepared to support other efforts that may contribute to achieve that outcome. Under any circumstances, the establishment of an Ad Hoc committee on Nuclear Disarmament is imperative. And we must intensify our efforts to resume negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

Brazil attaches utmost importance to the preparatory process of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As a first contribution to a successful result of the revision process, we presented, together with the other members of the New Agenda Coalition, a position paper that reflects our views on nuclear disarmament and the strengthening process of the Treaty.

Worrying signs of policy decisions and other initiatives that are not conducive to the achievement of the objectives set forth in Article VI of that Treaty are a matter of grave concern. Brazil recalls the unequivocally commitment made by the nuclear weapon states in the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Brazil deplores any attempts at re-rationalizing nuclear doctrines that may include the possibility of using, testing or finding new roles for nuclear weapons.

Reductions in the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads as envisaged in the Moscow Treaty represent a positive step in the process of nuclear de-escalation between the Russian Federation and the United States of America.
Nevertheless those reductions cannot be a substitute for irreversible cuts in, and the total elimination of, nuclear weapons.

In regard to the CTBT, countries which are yet to sign and ratify it, particularly those whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, must clearly indicate their readiness to join the Treaty. This political sign is even more important as the actual prospect for the entry into force of the CTBT is the only parameter to guide the setting-up of the Treaty’s International Monitoring System. In our view, the IMS should not be accelerated on the basis of purely technical considerations.

One of the most significant measures in the field of nuclear disarmament is the further development of nuclear-weapon-free zones in some regions. Brazil is committed to the consolidation of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and to the creation of new ones around the globe. Within this context Brazil and New Zealand once again are submitting to the consideration of this Committee a resolution on Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

We welcome with particular satisfaction the announcement by Cuba of its decisions to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Tlatelolco Treaty. These decisions contribute to the universalization of the NPT and have the important effect of now bringing all Latin American and Caribbean countries into the Tlatelolco Treaty, which established the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in an inhabited area of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of missiles requires adequate consideration by the international community. It is a complex matter, with implications beyond security issues. The UN Panel of Experts, chaired by Ambassador Antonio Guerreiro, adopted a report, which is to be a reference for future international negotiations. We expect it will be well received and endorsed by all member States.

While further refining and strengthening mechanisms to address the security concerns derived from the question of missiles, the international community should bear in mind the legitimate aspirations of all States to reap the benefits of peaceful uses of space technologies. Therefore restrictions should not be imposed on the unimpeded transfer of technology for the purpose of peaceful space programs.

Mr. Chairman,

As we have mentioned before, multilateralism in the area of international security and weapons of mass destruction is facing new challenges. Changes have
taken place. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has not remained immune.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is, in our view, a well-crafted instrument, which should be seen as a model for initiatives in other areas. The CWC is a non-discriminatory treaty. It provides convincing, impartial and legitimate means for verifying compliance. It addresses disarmament, non-proliferation and international cooperation in balanced terms. It is a treaty vowed to universality.

The Organization achieved very significant results in its first five years of existence. We witnessed an impressive increase in the membership of the OPCW, which quickly grew from 87 founding members of 1997, to the present total of 145 member States. The Secretariat conducted more than 1100 inspections in more than 55 States Parties. The OPCW certified the irreversible destruction of more than 15 percent of declared chemical weapons stockpiles in the world. The organization promoted and strengthened international cooperation programs for the peaceful use of chemical technology. This is a fundamental pillar of the CWC, to which developing countries attach great importance.

Yet, after a promising beginning, with such impressive figures regarding disarmament, inspections, promotion of cooperation and with a record of impartiality, the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention has faced serious challenges. Let us hope that the changes which took place do not affect the chemical weapons regime and do not alter the positive course that the OPCW has taken up to now. The independence of the Organization created to ensure the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention constitutes one of the foremost qualities of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

We can no longer continue to ignore the threats to security posed by biological weapons and must work together to reinforce the BTWC regime. The negotiations of a Verification Protocol were abruptly suspended in July 2001. The 5th Review Conference was left uncompleted because it did not reach consensus on whether multilateral negotiations on the strengthening of the BWC were to proceed. For Brazil there is no alternative to a multilateral approach.

The outlook for the 5th Review Conference, to be resumed next November in Geneva, is not promising. At the present stage, a failure of the Conference to be resumed might express that the BTWC is in agony.
Mr. Chairman,

The fight against illicit trade of small arms and light weapons is among Brazil’s priorities. We have been actively participating, within the framework of the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Mercosur, to coordinate international measures that are urgently needed.

For Brazil, the results of the UN Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in NY in July 2001, are positive. We now have the real challenge of implementing the Program of Action.

Thanks to the early implementation of the provisions contained in the Interamerican Convention Against Illicit Traffic of Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives, which entered into force in 1999, the main provisions contained in the Program of Action are already in place in Brazil. We expect other States to implement it in full.

There are, nonetheless, provisions which require further international discussions. Brazil welcomes the establishment of a Group of Experts on marking and tracing, whose report will constitute one of the basic documents of the First Biannual Follow-Up Meeting of Conference, to be held in 2003. We sincerely expect that we will advance towards an international legally binding instrument that enables States to trace illicit weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil maintains its firm commitment to the Ottawa Convention, keeping the focus on a relentless pursuit of the core humanitarian objectives of this instrument. Brazil reiterates its concern with the universalization of the Convention. Even though the overall membership has reached the impressive mark of 126 countries, there are still key mine holder countries that remain outside the Convention.

We consider that it is essential that initiatives aimed at furthering the implementation of the convention be co-ordinated taking into consideration specific regional circumstances and priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil is proud to belong to a region free of international conflicts. Latin America and the Caribbean countries traditionally present one of the lowest levels of military expenditure, according to information released by the United Nations.
Defense procurement in our region aims basically at the replacement of obsolete material.

The commitment of our region to peace and disarmament is reflected in a number of regional and sub-regional instruments that attest to our common purpose of integration and development, as illustrated by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic.

Mr. Chairman,

The First Committee of the General Assembly has an essential role to play. This is a forum for expressing and creating political will. Let us hope we can make proof of the appropriate level of political commitment that is needed at the present historical crossroads.

We need therefore to renew our commitment to multilateralism and look for multilateral responses to universal problems.