First Committee
Thematic Debate on Cluster 1 – “Nuclear Weapons”

13 October 2010

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares,
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the Conference on
Disarmament, on behalf of MERCOSUR and Associated States

Check against delivery
I have the honor to speak on behalf of MERCOSUR Members and Associated States: Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Uruguay and my own country, Brazil.

Mr. Chairman,

MERCOSUR and Associated States take the floor to renew their commitment to the promotion of a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community is increasingly aware that while nuclear weapons exist, there will be a real risk of their use and proliferation. The existence of nuclear weapons diminish the security of all States, including those who possess them. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States fulfill their commitments and enter, in good faith, in a general, transparent, irreversible and verifiable process, under a well-defined schedule, with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

MERCOSUR and Associated States underscore, among recent positive events in the nuclear field, firstly the signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) last April between the United States and the Russian Federation. The New START is a step in the right direction, albeit limited, by failing to comply with the essential requirement of irreversibility. Secondly, we recognize the announcements by some nuclear-weapon States that have declared the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines as well as the statements made by some nuclear-weapon States regarding measures to strengthen their negative security assurances. In addition, MERCOSUR and Associated States welcome the announcements made by those States whose ratifications are required for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty that they will continue and complete the process of ratification of the Treaty.

All these events and initiatives demonstrate the renewed priority that the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation have today on the international agenda, but they are not enough to make us closer to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

For that to happen, MERCOSUR and Associated States hope that the First Committee will follow-up on the results achieved during the Eighth NPT Review Conference last May, which are reflected in its Outcome Document. These results helped us to approach a new phase in the nuclear disarmament process.

MERCOSUR and Associated States welcome the adoption of the 64 actions contained in the Plan of Action adopted by the Review Conference, through which, inter alia, the nuclear-weapon States confirmed their unequivocal commitment to the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, agreed to accelerate the progress in the implementation of the practical steps leading to nuclear disarmament contained in the
Final Document of the Conference of 2000 and agreed that the process of reducing nuclear arsenals should cover all types of nuclear weapons without exception. Also important is the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to report on the implementation of these steps to the Preparatory Committee of the Ninth Review Conference in 2014. We expect concrete progress to be initiated as early as possible. The result of the 2015 Review Conference should include the adoption of a binding timeframe for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. MERCOSUR and Associated States remain committed to this proposal.

Mr. Chairman,

Progress in the NPT Review Conference was achieved in clear contrast to the impasse that still prevails in the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference concluded 2010 without adopting a program of work that would enable it to begin substantive work. In this regard, MERCOSUR and Associated States take note of the final document presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations under his own responsibility at the end of the High Level Meeting in support of the work of the Conference on Disarmament on last 24 September.

Our countries will continue to give their full support for consensus formulae that enable the adoption of a Programme of Work by the CD and, therefore, the negotiation of new instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation. Besides stressing their readiness to initiate, without delay, negotiations on a treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, that promote the objectives of both non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, the members of MERCOSUR and Associated States also express their interest in addressing the other key issues on the agenda of the CD, such as: nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of those weapons. We hope that discussions on these four issues may lead to the conclusion of legal instruments.

Mr. Chairman,

It is fundamental and urgent that all States that have not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty do it as soon as possible, especially all nuclear-weapon States and those which are listed in Annex 2 of the CTBT. We welcome the ratifications by the Marshall Islands, Central African Republic and Trinidad and Tobago since October, 2009.

MERCOSUR and Associated States reiterate the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear tests. In this regard, it is crucial that all States be committed not to promote or carry out nuclear tests or any other form of nuclear explosions, as well as any other action that contradicts the CTBT provisions and obligations.

As members of the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free-zone, through the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, MERCOSUR and Associated States highlight the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free-zones to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and
non-proliferation. The Second Conference of State Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones and Mongolia, last April, is an important initiative that should be continued.

As members of the Union of South American Nations, UNASUR, responding to the call of the UNASUR Council of Heads of States and Governments, during the Summit held in Bariloche in 2009, MERCOSUR Members and Associated States have decided to reinforce South America as a zone of peace. This call was heeded by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Ministers during the extraordinary meeting held in Quito, in 2009, when, among other resolutions, they decided to ensure that South America remains a nuclear-weapon-free-zone and that nuclear technology is to be used solely for peaceful purposes, according to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and other international conventions on this matter.

MERCOSUR and Associated States welcome, in addition, the decision by the Eighth NPT Review Conference to encourage the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free-zones, on the basis of freely arrived agreements among the States in each region. We equally welcome the call encouraging the nuclear-weapon States to withdraw the reservations presented to the protocols of these treaties, which include negative security assurances. It is also important to highlight the decision to hold a Conference in 2012 for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

MERCOSUR and Associated States underline the relevant contribution of the IAEA to the common efforts to establish a safer international system. In this regard, we recognize the importance of the IAEA safeguards system in accordance with the NPT and those treaties which establish nuclear-weapon-free-zones, as an essential tool to assure that nuclear materials are not used for military purposes. MERCOSUR and Associated States also highlight the valuable contribution that IAEA can offer to disarmament actions through independent verification.

In light of the commitment to the promotion of nuclear-weapon-free-zones, MERCOSUR and Associated States support, as we did in previous years, the draft resolution entitled “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas”.

Mr. Chairman,

MERCOSUR and Associated States consider that nuclear weapons have no role in the new world order, more just, prosperous and democratic, which we all want to promote. We are convinced that if resources for nuclear weapon programs were spent to support social and economic development, this would revert to all mankind’s benefit. Nuclear weapons are the heritage of an era and of a mentality that has already been overcome. We expect this First Committee to reflect, through its decisions and resolutions, this new reality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.