First Committee

Thematic Debate on Cluster 6 – “Other Disarmament Measures and International Security”

20 October 2010

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

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Mr. Chairman,

Modern societies depend heavily on the constant availability of information and telecommunications services and infrastructure. The so-called ICTs (information and communication technologies) have become extremely valuable resources, crucial for the prosperity of nations and the well being of their citizens.

Nevertheless, dependence on these new technologies has also given room to new vulnerabilities, which can undermine the activities of Governments, public services, private companies, banks and stock markets. In addition, these new technologies also represent an asset to be used as cyber warfare. There are already national armed forces with specialized military units trained and equipped to disable or even destroy critical infrastructure by means of intrusion and disruption of information networks. The same tactics may also come to be used by terrorist individuals or organizations.

In light of these new developments, Brazil believes that the international community should strive to build appropriate tools for dealing with criminal and terrorist activities involving information technology. In a complementary approach, the international community should also consider the need of developing international instruments to cope with the emergence of cyber warfare.

Criminal and terrorist activities should be discussed in the relevant fora, and the United Nations should play a relevant role in assisting Member States, as required, towards some of the following goals: (i) establishing emergency and alternative networks to protect critical infrastructure, (ii) assessing national network structures, analyzing interdependencies and identifying effective methods of protection, (iii) implementing tools and measures to enable authorities to trace the origin of cyber attacks, (iv) qualifying national institutions to conduct testing and evaluation of the security level of information systems, and (v) avoiding discriminatory mechanisms that could prevent countries from accessing high technology in the fields of telecommunications and information systems.

The UN should also play a leading role in the discussions on the use of information and telecommunications as cyber warfare in interstate conflict situations, paying special attention to the following elements: identification, characteristics and classification of information warfare, identification and classification of information weapons and means that can be used as information weapons as well as the establishment of multilateral rules for the use of information weapons.
Mr. Chairman,

Brazil took part in the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established by the UN Secretary-General in pursuance of General Assembly Resolution 60/45 of December 2005. Its final report, adopted by consensus, acknowledged the existence of potential threats, risks and vulnerabilities in the field of information security. The Group recognized that uncertainty regarding attribution of disruptive activities and the absence of common understandings on acceptable State behavior may create the risk of instability and misperception. The GGE presented therefore a number of confidence-building and other measures to reduce the risk of misperception resulting from ICT disruptions, which we consider to be a valuable contribution in the field of information and telecommunications security.

While we support those recommendations, we note that they were mainly focused on confidence building measures. Brazil hopes that, in a near future, discussions can be resumed in order to address additional measures, such as the need to develop international legal standards in the field of information and telecommunications security.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil supports the draft resolution presented by the Russian Federation on “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security”. We are thankful to the leading role that Russia has taken on this issue for several years already and for the partnership carried out with Brazil in this area, as reflected in the signature of a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of international security for information and communication during President Lula’s visit to Moscow in May 2010.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.