First Committee
Thematic Debate on Cluster 5 – “Regional Disarmament and Security”

21 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

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

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC), with headquarters in Lima, Peru, was created by the General Assembly in 1986, through Resolution 41/60J.

The UN-LiREC differs from other centres of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs because its mandate includes not only the implementation of peace and disarmament measures, but also the promotion of economic and social development.

Based on this reinforced mandate, the Centre has succeeded in implementing programs of work that are characterized by their interdisciplinary approach and the level of coordination with different actors in the region, including other United Nations bodies, national governments, provincial and municipal authorities and civil society representatives.

The Centre’s programs include, among other issues: (i) promotion of confidence-building measures; (ii) prevention and solution of conflicts; (iii) support to the States in the region for complying with weapons control commitments, and (iv) education on problems that affect Latin America and Caribbean peace and security.

Assisting States in reducing and preventing armed violence by means of increasing weapons control has been one of the important areas of work of the Regional Centre in recent years.

In line with its mandate, the Centre has undertaken a range of activities at national, regional and sub regional levels, among which we underline the following:

- training courses for combating illicit arms traffic, which have prepared more than 2700 legal officers since 2002;
- technical assistance on stockpile management and destruction of firearms;
- review of national legislations’ compatibility with international commitments in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation;
- fostering coordination between national agencies in the security area, which is one of the main challenges to our region; and
- education on international instruments in the field of small arms and light weapons.

As highlighted by the Secretary-General’s report (document A/65/139), “the reporting period saw a rise in the number of assistance requests from Member States and
regional organizations, demonstrating the increasing confidence in the Centre’s effectiveness and its recognized role in this area.

MERCOSUR and Associated States thank Governments, within and outside the region, for the financial support they have offered with a view to develop the Regional Centre’s activities. In this regard, we call upon the international community to continue providing support to the Centre’s activities.

Taking into account the important role of the Regional Centre in promoting an agenda for peace, security and development in Latin America and Caribbean, MERCOSUR and Associated States support Peru for proposing a draft resolution, on behalf of the region, related to the UN-LiREC activities, which we expect to be adopted by consensus, as in previous sessions of this First Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The South American Defense Council (CDS, in Spanish) of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was created in December 2008 as a consultation, cooperation and coordination forum on matters of Defense, with the objectives of consolidating South America as a zone of peace, forging an identity on defense matters and promoting consensus for strengthening regional cooperation. In particular, the Council promotes: the analysis and discussion of common elements of a collective perspective on defense matters; the exchange of information; the formulation of regional joint positions at multilateral defense fora; the adoption of confidence-building measures; and the cooperation on military education and training.

Since its creation, the CDS has adopted its Statute and biannual Plans of Action, which underline actions on defense policies; military cooperation; humanitarian actions and peace operations; defense industry and technology; and education and training.

In this context, the Defense Council has achieved agreements on the establishment of a mechanism of confidence-building measures and regional security. In addition, discussions have been held on the methodology of measuring military expenditure in order to promote transparency, and activities have been promoted on matters such as the development of defense industry and technology, the participation in peace operations and the modernization of the Defense Ministries of the region. A decision was also taken to establish the Centre for Strategic Studies on Defense, as an institution for generating knowledge and disseminating a South American strategic thinking on defense and security matters.

MERCOSUR and Associated States welcome the important achievements of the South American Defense Council since its creation in December 2008 and express their determination to support this forum that contributes to strengthen regional unity, peace and security.
Mr. Chairman,

MERCOSUR and Associated States recognize the urgent need for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons because of the harmful effects of these activities to the security of all States, sub regions, regions and the world, which, among other factors, endanger the well-being of the peoples and the economic and social development.

In this regard, MERCOSUR and Associated States reiterate the importance of continuing bilateral, subregional, and regional efforts to further advance cooperation on security matters and implement the agreements, declarations, and understandings adopted over the years with respect to peace, stability, confidence, and security. In addition to this, we reiterate our decision to continue fostering a culture of peace and promoting education for peace among the countries of the region, reaffirming our goal of continuing to devote more resources to the well-being of our peoples.