
Mr. Chairman,

The Cuban delegation congratulates itself on seeing you leading the work of this Committee, and extends its congratulation to you and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

We fully endorse the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We likewise support the statement made on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Mr. Chairman,

Last 26 September, we had the historic opportunity of participating in the first High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly devoted to Nuclear Disarmament; a Cuban initiative, embraced and promoted by the Non-Aligned Movement.

This High-Level Meeting brought about an excellent opportunity to exchange and move forward nuclear disarmament, to send a political message of commitment of the UN Member States to a world free of nuclear weapons, as well as to boost the coordination of efforts of the international community to achieve the prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear arsenals.

Several proposals were submitted during the said meeting. Among them, we highlight the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. In the context of this First Committee, NAM will present a draft resolution of follow-up to the High-Level Meeting, which will include, inter alia, proclaiming the 26th September as International Day for the Complete Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

In the context of that Meeting, CELAC Member States presented a Declaration containing our priorities and we agreed, inter alia, to continue coordinating positions and contributing to the implementation of practical actions as a follow-up to the above mentioned High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament.
Cuba supports the NAM proposal to urgently start the negotiations in the Disarmament Conference, for the early conclusion of a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons banning the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat to use such weapons and stipulate their destruction.

In like manner, we would like to reiterate our commitment to work in the convening of an International High-Level Conference by 2008 at the very latest, to identify ways and methods to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible period, with the purpose of agreeing upon a phased programme for the complete elimination of these weapons within a specific timeframe.

Mr. Chairman,

It is unacceptable that "nuclear deterrence" remains the bedrock of military doctrines that authorize the possession and use of nuclear arsenals.

The complete elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons under strict international control is the only guarantee that those weapons will not be used by States or anyone else.

Nuclear powers continue failing to comply with their obligation under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to negotiate an international treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons, and instead continue improving their nuclear arsenals, in a vertical proliferation of which little is said.

Concrete steps should be promoted and agreed upon to completely eliminate and prohibit nuclear weapons in a binding, non-discriminatory, transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

It is also a priority to initiate international negotiations to conclude, as early as possible, a treaty that offers universal and unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat to use these weapons.

The establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones is a necessary and important contribution to the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation efforts. We support the establishment without delay of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East.

In this context, Cuba believes the failure to comply with the agreement of holding an International Conference in 2012 for the establishment of a Zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is concerning and unjustifiable. The holding of such Conference is an important and integral part of the final outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We call upon the convening of this Conference without further delay before this year draws to its end.

Our country reaffirms the inalienable right of States to undertake research, production and to develop peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination.
We consider that manipulation regarding non-proliferation based on double standards and political interests should stop, for it intends to limit the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy by developing countries.

Multilateralism, based on the strict respect to the Charter of the United Nations, is the only way to attain outstanding and lasting results in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba supports the efforts to optimize the UN disarmament machinery, but is certain that the paralysis affecting a great extent of that machinery is mainly the result of the lack of political will by some States to achieve actual progress, in particular on nuclear disarmament.

We are satisfied that the Disarmament Commission has agreed upon the agenda of substantive items for the current three-year cycle, and that the item: “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons” has been included.

Mr. Chairman,

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) plays an essential role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum of treaties in the field of disarmament.

We are concerned about the ideas of some to put aside the CD under the argument that it is a useless body. Cuba does not endorse that position. We reiterate it is still the responsibility of us all to preserve and strengthen the CD.

The Conference on Disarmament should adopt as soon as possible a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes into account real disarmament priorities, starting by nuclear disarmament.

Cuba considers that this body is prepared to negotiate simultaneously a treaty that eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons; prohibits the arms race in outer space; and provides effective security guarantees for States like Cuba which do not possess nuclear weapons; and another treaty that prohibits the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba welcomes the outcomes of the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which enable the reaffirmation of the basic principles and objectives of the Convention and the preservation of the balance of its four fundamental pillars: destruction, verification, assistance and international cooperation.

The OPCW has an important role in the promotion of the economic and technological development of States Parties, particularly those less developed. It is
urgent to adopt a Plan of Action to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention on Chemical Weapons.

Likewise, our country reiterates its commitment to the strict implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Cuba considers there is much ahead to do in favor of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X of this important instrument.

The sole way of strengthening the Convention on Biological Weapons is through the adoption of a legally-binding Protocol that closes the loopholes remaining in that instrument and includes the fundamental pillars of the convention, including international cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

In March this year, the international community verified the lack of agreement and consensus in the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Conference provided a historic opportunity to give effective answer to the serious consequences of the illicit and unregulated trade in arms suffered by many people and States worldwide; nevertheless, the historical opportunity was not duly seized.

Unfortunately, the agreement of working in that process on the basis of consensus was disregarded and they forced to vote on a text that was not on a par with the just claims and needs of the international community.

The Arms Trade Treaty is characterized by having numerous ambiguities, uncertainties, inconsistencies and legal loopholes. It is an unbalanced text favoring arms-exporting States, who are provided with privileges to the detriment of the legitimate interests of other States, including those of national defense and security. It favored the interests of certain exporting States over the human suffering caused by the illicit and unregulated trafficking in arms.

Cuba will continue to implement all the necessary measures to prevent and combat the illicit trade in arms.

On the other hand, we are pleased that the Second Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, has adopted by consensus its final documents, in which the full effect and validity of the Programme of Action as adequate instrument to face this scourge is reaffirmed.

Mr. Chairman,

Amidst an international panorama characterized by economic crisis and cuts in public expenses, the global military expenditures continue to increase, with figures in 2012 estimated at 1, 75 trillion dollars.
Similarly, in the last year we have witnessed an increase in the funding to subversive plans against legitimately-established governments, as part of the regime-change policy, which supports the geopolitical interests of major powers; conflicts fueled by the illegal arms transfers to non-state actors and the use of mercenaries; all abovementioned in flagrant violation of international norms and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The described international scenario shows the importance of the work of this Committee, concerning the disarmament issues and international security; in that regard, we call for the achievement of concrete results.

Allow me to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by renewing the full support of the Cuban delegation for your work and the success of the work of this Committee.

Thank you very much