Statement by Ambassador Antonio José Vallim Guerreiro  
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament  
On behalf of the New Agenda Coalition

Geneva, 12 March 2013

Madam President,

I have the honor of taking the floor on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC): Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.

We would like to congratulate you on your Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We stand ready to support efforts to achieve agreement on a much-awaited program of work and the resumption of substantive work in the Conference. We would also like to welcome the participation of Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom in the CD and recognize the important contribution of civil society to furthering the cause of nuclear disarmament. As we celebrated international women’s day on the 8 March, we also wish to recognize the important role women can and should play in the area of disarmament and the need for equality and increased participation in our activities.

Madam President,

As CD members are aware, the NAC is a cross-regional group established in 1998 to further the cause of nuclear disarmament. Since its establishment, the NAC has worked actively to promote full and effective implementation of all nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments. The achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons remains our primary goal.

While considerable progress has been made to strengthen the non-proliferation norm, the goal of nuclear disarmament remains elusive.

Our countries strongly believe that the only guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used is their total elimination. Until this goal is achieved, we also reaffirm the legitimate right of non-nuclear weapon States to receive legally binding negative security assurances from nuclear weapon States. We continue to emphasize that nuclear disarmament should be conducted under effective international control, and be based on the principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility.
2013 represents a year of opportunity to achieve progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. The focus on nuclear disarmament, as evidenced by a series of significant meetings which will take place this year, bears testimony to the overwhelming view of the international community that urgent progress is needed to advance our shared goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. The NPT Preparatory Committee, the Open-Ended Working Group of the UN General Assembly and the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, as well as the Conference on Disarmament, provide opportunities to accelerate progress on nuclear disarmament. In addition, Norway hosted an International Conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons aimed at developing a greater understanding of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons. It is our hope that all States seize these opportunities in a common endeavor to permanently rid our world from the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

Madam President,

Next month Geneva will host the second Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The NAC looks forward to contributing constructively to this meeting and to working with all parties to secure a successful outcome.

The Action Plan that emerged from the 2010 NPT Review Conference not only reaffirmed the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States (NWS) to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty, but also recommitted the NWS to accelerate progress on the steps agreed in 1995 and 2000 to advance the implementation of Article VI. The Conference also called upon all States parties to exert all efforts to promote universal adherence to the NPT, and not to undertake any actions that could negatively affect prospects for the universality of the Treaty. The blueprint provided by the 2010 Action Plan on nuclear disarmament, including the points contained in Action 5, must be implemented as a priority and we look forward, in this regard, to receiving reports on the accelerated implementation of these commitments.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the NAC believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones represent a valuable means to enhance global and regional peace and security, to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation efforts and to contribute towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. We are pleased that the majority of the world’s countries are part of such zones and we look forward to further progress in this regard.
The establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction would undoubtedly produce significant benefits not just for the region but also more broadly. The 1995 resolution on the Middle East is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote. The resolution holds an important place in the overall NPT architecture and remains valid until its full implementation.

We regret that the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was not convened in 2012 as agreed in the 2010 Action Plan. All efforts must be exerted towards the convening of the Conference without further delay. We commend the ongoing efforts of the Conference Facilitator, Under Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava. We acknowledge the seriousness with which States of the region have approached this endeavor. We call on the facilitator, the co-conveners and the wider international community to assist the States of the region in any way they can in this important endeavor.

Madam President,

Neither the pursuit nor the retention of nuclear weapons can enhance regional or international security. The NAC strongly condemns the nuclear test carried out by the DPRK on February 12th in violation of its obligation under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We urge the DPRK to fulfill its commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including those in the September 2005 joint statement, to abandon all nuclear weapons programs, to return, without delay, to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA verification, with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.

Madam President,

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the last Treaty negotiated in the CD, remains an important outstanding issue on which further progress is urgently required. The Treaty is a core element of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime, raising the threshold for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, preventing a qualitative arms race and reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons in national security strategies. The entry into force of the Treaty would also strengthen confidence in the international security system through the establishment of an effective verification mechanism.
The continued modernization of nuclear arsenals and the development of advanced and new types of nuclear weapons, together with the vast resources allocated for this purpose, run counter to the undertakings made by the nuclear weapon States.

We urge States to refrain from any action that would undermine the letter and spirit of relevant multilateral disarmament instruments and their universalization. All States are also urged to pursue policies that are fully compatible with the objective of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons.

Each unfulfilled agreement and undertaking reached at Review Conferences diminishes the credibility of the NPT and undermines confidence among State Parties. Accordingly, the onus is on all States Parties to undertake their respective obligations to ensure the full and effective implementation of the NPT, including the agreements reached at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

It is no longer credible that progress on nuclear disarmament is left to languish. Let 2013 be the year in which we begin in earnest to finally eradicate the continued threat of mass annihilation that looms over humanity. The NAC stands ready to play its part.

I thank you.