FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE TO THE 2005 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE TREATY ON THE NON PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS - NPT -

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR ALFONSO VALDIVIESO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COLOMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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(Check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to express to you my congratulations for your election to chair this Conference, as well as to assure you the total collaboration of my delegation in your important and demanding task. Your knowledge on the topic and your firm commitment with the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the professionalism of the employees of the Disarmament Department of the United Nations, headed by Ambassador Dhanapala, assure the success of this first session of the Preparatory Committee.

As a member of the Non-Align Movement State Party to the NPT, Colombia subscribes in its entirety the statement read yesterday on behalf of the Movement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the 2000 Review Conference the international community has witnessed various negative developments in the field of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Aside from the slow progress that has characterized the issue since its beginning, strategic defense doctrines continue to set out rationales for the use of nuclear weapons. The decision by one of the nuclear states to withdraw from the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) in order to develop a national anti-ballistic missile defense system, which may trigger an armaments race in outer space, as well as the possible formulation of a nuclear posture review that expands the circumstances under which nuclear weapons could be used and the countries that they could be used against, are clear proofs of an international deterioration on the issue. If we add up to this that four states still remain to accede to the NPT, and the stall of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament due to the continued inflexible postures of some of the Nuclear Weapon States, there is no doubt that the future is worrisome even to the most optimist.
In this difficult juncture in which this first session of the PrepCom takes place, we should not spare any effort in the consideration of the possible actions that will allow to dispel a dangerous frustration feeling that seems to be shared by several States parties. Colombia, as a country committed with the efforts of the international community oriented towards the non proliferation and the nuclear disarmament, reiterates that the Non Proliferation Treaty has played an important role along these years. Thus, we are convinced of the necessity to guarantee its preservation, its strengthening and its universality. In this context, we are convinced that it is through a successful review process that the Treaty keeps its validity.

Colombia considers that this first session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2005 Review Conference should include both procedural issues and matters of substance, and that it should be focused on nuclear disarmament. In this regard, it is fundamental a review of the implementation of the 13 practical steps. Our suggestion not only refers to the necessity of facing the substantive topics with ample and generous approaches, but also to assume with the same attitude the procedural issues.

On the other hand, Colombia believes that the situation in the Middle East also requires our attention. We should maintain the pressure of the international community so that the only country in the region that is not party to the NPT accepts to put its nuclear facilities under the IAEA safeguards, as a concrete contribution of confidence building in favor of the non proliferation regime, as well as a significant contribution to the regional and world peace.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation wishes to underline that there is still a lot to be done in the field of nuclear disarmament. The danger of a nuclear war still exists, as well as the possibility of a total destruction. Furthermore, as was said above, the doctrines that seek to justify the use of nuclear weapons also persist, as well as the qualitative development of these weapons. Although we recognize that the reduction in the number of nuclear weapons is a step in the right direction, a more resolved action is required on the part of the states that possess these weapons to establish a program for its total elimination.
Likewise, we consider urgent to begin in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the negotiations agreed in the Principles and Objectives for Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament, on the treatment of nuclear disarmament, on a treaty non discriminatory and universally applicable for the prohibition of the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons, as well as to negotiate an international legally binding agreement on security assurances for the States that do not possess nuclear weapons against the use or the threat of use of these weapons.

The disarmament agenda also implies a prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty -CTBT-. My country signed the CTBT in 1996 as a result of its conviction that a total nuclear test ban is indispensable for international peace and security. Colombia is a non-nuclear country without any intention or reason to change that situation. On the contrary, we firmly believe in the non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons an in the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. The inclusion of Colombia in Annex II of the Treaty as a country which ratification is needed to its entry into force gives us an additional responsibility. Our commitment with the CTBT is reflected in our national government will to ratify it as soon as possible. Our Congress has already issued the law that approves the treaty and it is now under our constitutional control.

For a country like Colombia that doesn't have neither has never had aspirations in the field of the nuclear weapons, the participation in a Treaty as the NPT, besides the contribution that can represent for the international peace and security, has a very concrete objective, the cooperation for peaceful uses. That was one of the main motivations in 1968 and it has also been since then one of the biggest frustrations. In this review exercise that we will carry out in the next days, it is necessary to recognize that the promised cooperation for peaceful uses of the nuclear energy has had a very faulty development and that we must take concrete measures to correct this situation. In this respect, Colombia insists in the proposal to consider the possibility to convene an Extraordinary Conference of the Parties, dedicated exclusively to the development of the cooperation for peaceful uses of the nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,

While listening to the interventions in this debate in connection with the NPT and the process of nuclear disarmament, there is an element that gets
our attention and it is the difference that exists between the rhetoric in connection with the international security and the speech on other multilateral issues. As well as in other issues of the multilateral agenda the priority is the promotion of the human rights, the respect of the humanitarian international law and also the new concept, promoted by some delegations, of human security, similarly, this vision should be incorporated in reference to the international security and the doctrines which is based upon. Any defense doctrine should incorporate as a priority the respect of the international humanitarian law and the human security. In this sense, it is evident that the multilateral calendar could be more coherent.

To finalize, Mr. President, allow me to emphasize that in 1995 we, the States parties to the NPT that don't possess nuclear weapons, accepted the indefinite extension of the Treaty, but we didn't accept the continuation indefinitely of a situation in which some States can have nuclear weapons and others don't. That is why we insist on the fulfillment of the unequivocal undertaking with the total elimination of nuclear arms given by the Nuclear Weapon States, as well as on the full implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed therein.