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Statement by

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(check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

Brazil associates itself with the statement delivered by Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition on Wednesday. Allow me, however, to make these few additional remarks in my national capacity:

One evident and well-known aspect of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is the fact that it was founded on the basis of a bargain, whereby non-nuclear weapon States would relinquish the option of acquiring or developing nuclear weapons whereas nuclear weapon States would engage in serious and bona fide efforts aiming at the dismantlement of their nuclear arsenals. The Treaty was conceived to be valid for 25 years, suggesting that those goals would be attained within that specific timeframe.

In this context, one can only regard with perplexity the current state of affairs regarding the NPT’s implementation. Close to the Treaty’s 45th anniversary, we are dealing with a world infested by some 17,000 nuclear weapons, with nuclear forces experiencing regular modernization and qualitative improvement, and with recurrent affirmations by nuclear weapon States about the central role of these weapons in their national security doctrines, as well as justifications that these weapons are essential for a country’s security. Notwithstanding, nuclear weapon States expect us to concur with their view that there has been an appropriate implementation of the NPT in all its pillars.

The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that since its entry into force, a much greater emphasis has been conferred to the implementation of the NPT’s nuclear non-proliferation obligations. From that perspective, the Treaty has been a success story. However, this is not what the NPT is all about. Progress in nuclear disarmament has been clearly lacking, despite claims to the contrary by the nuclear weapon States.

While bilateral and unilateral reductions and status downgrades by the nuclear weapon States are relevant, they do not amount to nuclear disarmament. The cuts are not verifiable or transparent nor are proven to be irreversible. The estimated nuclear arsenals, even if far fewer than those of the Cold War, could still destroy the world many times over. Furthermore, as already mentioned, quantitative arsenal reductions mean little when offset by much greater qualitative increases in nuclear weapons’ destructive capacity. From that perspective, we could question even whether the “cessation of the nuclear arms race” has effectively taken place.
Mr. Chairman,

Brazil appreciates the submission of reports on the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan presented by the nuclear weapon States, as an important transparency measure. They show us, however, that almost two decades since the indefinite extension of the NPT, progress is clearly insufficient in the implementation of Article VI of the Treaty, as well as of the disarmament commitments assumed in the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences – especially Steps 6, 8, and 9 of the 2000 Outcome Document and Action 5 of the 2010 Action Plan.

Forty-four years have elapsed since the NPT’s entry into force. How long will it take to have a clear political horizon with a view to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons?

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, the international community duly recalls the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear detonation. In this context, Brazil fully supports the renewed attention that the subject has received since the last Review Conference of the NPT, whose Action Plan stressed the “deep concern at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that these weapons could be used and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons.”

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear weapons are clearly incompatible with international humanitarian law. They do not respect the principles of distinction, proportionality or the obligation not to cause unnecessary harm. This was recognized by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Use or Threat of Nuclear Weapons of 1996.

In this regard, Brazil must once again stress the need to achieve a clear, legally binding and multilateral commitment on nuclear disarmament, on the part of all States. What is needed is a comprehensive and legally binding framework committing all States to a world free of nuclear weapons, implemented in an unconditional manner and backed by clearly defined timelines and benchmarks.

As mentioned in our intervention during the General Debate, Brazil sees the CD as the appropriate forum for these negotiations because any such efforts must include all States possessing nuclear weapons. We would not, however, object any negotiating process that could take place within the United Nations framework, as in the UN General Assembly. As some delegations have mentioned, the Arms Trade Treaty negotiating process is a reminder of the effectiveness of multilateral
negotiations and could serve as inspiration for a negotiating framework on nuclear disarmament.

Until negotiations on nuclear disarmament begin, progress on important interim measures remains urgent, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); the celebration of a treaty that gives effect to the legitimate interest of non-nuclear weapon States in receiving unequivocal and legally binding security assurances from nuclear weapon States; and the conclusion of a multilateral, non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices – which should fulfil both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

Greater progress on nuclear disarmament is a priority of the international community. More and more, peoples of all around the globe, including in nuclear weapon States, understand that there is no room for continuous procrastination. This has been made clear in Conferences such as in Oslo and Nayarit. We increasingly sense that this debate cannot be oriented by means of notions such as strategic balance, minimal deterrence or undiminished security. The present status quo, and the absence of any political horizon for the elimination of nuclear weapons, has become untenable. Our work at the NPT review cycles cannot be an exercise in rolling over commitments every five years. 2015 must represent a turning point in this regard. It will be necessary, for all States Parties, but especially nuclear weapon States, to muster the political will and leadership that has been lacking in order to ensure the fulfillment of our collective commitments, with the sense of urgency that they require.

I thank you.