I Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Brazil

Cluster I

Mr. Chairman,

The current state of affairs regarding the implementation of the NPT’s disarmament pillar is appalling. Heading to the Treaty’s 50th anniversary, ours is a world infested with thousands of nuclear weapons, many of which are still on a hair-trigger alert, enough to inflict unprecedented catastrophic consequences.

Moreover, all Nuclear Weapon States are carrying out today initiatives aimed at modernizing their nuclear arsenals. Under rehashed rationales, the role of nuclear weapons in security policies is being reaffirmed, both nationally and in the context of military alliances which rely on nuclear arms.

While we welcomed bilateral and unilateral reductions that took place, years or decades ago, they are no substitute for truly systematic steps to comply with the obligations enshrined in the Treaty and the commitments agreed upon in past Review Conferences. Had they been fulfilled in good faith, we would be moving, even if incrementally, towards
the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in an irreversible, transparent and verifiable manner.

As a concrete contribution to this debate, the New Agenda Coalition has presented a Working Paper on strengthening accountability through enhanced transparency. Nuclear Weapon States reports regarding their national implementation of Article VI have not yet been standardized, in line with Action 21 of the Plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference. We hope that the Preparatory Committee will discuss options, including possible benchmarks, to improve the measurability of the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments, in order to ensure and facilitate the objective evaluation of any progress.

Mr. Chairman,

The goal of a world without nuclear weapons is regrettably more elusive than ever. The so-called “step-by-step” approach advocated by Nuclear Weapon States and their military allies has fallen into disrepute not only for lack of concrete action or the reiteration of flawed deterrence policies, but also in light of ongoing modernization programs which characterize a new, qualitative, and possibly even more perilous, nuclear arms race. All such steps have a direct, negative impact on the NPT's integrity and its credibility as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

The UN took a historic step, by convening the first session of the Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. We welcome the substantive engagement of all delegations present in New York, and we
are confident that the Conference will succeed in achieving its mandate in the coming months.

The Ban Treaty will not create a parallel regime. The treaty under negotiation is complementary to the NPT and will invigorate its purpose. By filing a legal gap and stigmatizing this category of weapons of mass destruction, the prohibition will give additional impetus for protracted compliance with Article VI.

Mr. Chairman,

In parallel with negotiations of a Ban Treaty, progress on important interim measures remains urgent, such as the long-awaited entry into force of the CTBT, as well as the conclusion 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. Also relevant would be the conclusion of a multilateral, non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty on fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, one that includes the issue of stocks of such materials, thereby furthering both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

Unilateral statements of intent from the nuclear weapon States are not enough. In line with Action 9 of the 2010 NPT Action Plan nuclear weapon States should (i) conclude the pending signatures or ratifications, without reservations or interpretations, of all negative security assurances protocols to the treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones; and (ii) withdraw the interpretative declarations to the protocols that have already been ratified.
Nearly forty years ago, the General Assembly's First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I) recognized that "effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons could strengthen the security of those States and international peace and security." We, therefore, call upon all States to negotiate and conclude a legally binding treaty on this issue as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

Greater progress on nuclear disarmament is a top priority. Increasingly, civil society around the globe understands that there is no room for procrastination. The NPT review cycles cannot be an exercise in rolling over commitments every five years. 2020 should represent a turning point in this regard. We should muster the political will and exercise leadership in order to ensure the success of the Review Conference with the necessary sense of urgency and responsibility.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.