STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR ROSARIO GREEN
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MEXICO

ON BEHALF OF THE DELEGATIONS OF BRAZIL,
EGYPT, IRELAND, MEXICO, NEW ZEALAND,
SOUTH AFRICA AND SWEDEN

GENERAL DEBATE

2000 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO
THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

NEW YORK, 24 APRIL 2000.
New Agenda Statement

General Debate

2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

New York, 24 April 2000

Mr. President,

May I begin by expressing to you our congratulations on your assumption as President of the VI Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and express our full confidence in your diplomatic skills to provide the appropriate guidance for a successful outcome. Let me assure you of our support in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, to address some issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that we think are important to ensure that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Treaty are being realized.

This is the first occasion that the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are gathered to review the operation of the Treaty since the adoption without a vote of the three Decisions and the Resolution of 1995. One of the cornerstones of this package was the Principles and Objectives which we agreed would govern our actions in pursuing the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Our renewed commitment in 1995 to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective nuclear disarmament measures included a commitment to the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States Parties of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally.
We must concede that the period of this review has not delivered systematic and progressive efforts by the nuclear weapon states, nor the entry into force of any multilateral instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament. We must recognize that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime is in a fraught state and that our Treaty is under stress.

It was within this context that we jointly launched the Declaration: Towards a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Need for a New Agenda. Our purpose in taking such an initiative was to put the nuclear agenda back on track, to give a clear perspective and underpinning through a new and clear undertaking to bring about a nuclear weapon free world without further prevarication.

The New Agenda is a programme of action sufficiently flexible to adapt to the circumstances and requirements of each successive stage in the process that leads to the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. It captures the elements of ongoing processes. And, in a pragmatic and realistic way it brings together successive steps for the international community to implement the obligations of this Treaty.

Fundamental to this initiative is the requirement for an unequivocal undertaking on the part of the five nuclear weapon states to the total elimination of their respective nuclear arsenals. Such a commitment would be new. It would determine all future action on the part of the nuclear weapon states. It would provide a reference point to evaluate progress towards the goals of the NPT, when we again meet in 2005 to review the implementation of the Treaty. And it would signal determination to uphold disarmament imperatives.

Mr. President,

The singular goal of the States Parties to the NPT is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This requires bringing to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, an imperative that was the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice. Adherence to this Treaty by all but four states, three of which operate
unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and retain the nuclear weapons option, is a testament to the extent of international commitment to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Underwritten by this unique commitment, there is now an inescapable onus on the nuclear weapon states to meet that challenge. And they must do so by making a definitive and unequivocal undertaking to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This would be demonstrated by engaging in an accelerated process of reductions. This new signal of determination, together with the efforts of the international community working in concert can achieve the goal of a nuclear weapons free world; a goal that is both realistic and pressing.

The one hundred and eighty seven States Parties gathered in this review process must engage in plain speaking. We have witnessed continued challenges to the purposes of the Treaty since we last met in 1995. Two states non-parties have carried out nuclear weapon test explosions. These states non-parties and one other state non-party continue to operate unsafeguarded facilities and have not renounced the nuclear weapon option. There has been alleged non-compliance by others. The achievements of the two major nuclear weapon states parties have fallen short of the systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, as required by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. Besides the completion of the negotiation of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty nothing else has been achieved on the multilateral front. In short the response to the challenge of the persistence of nuclear weapons has been of complacency or indifference in some quarters.

This critical Review Conference offers us a unique opportunity to move definitively forward in the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. We have reached the juncture when more far-reaching action must be decided upon. We already have precedents when firm steps were taken which initiated a process leading to the elimination of entire categories of weapons of mass destruction. In the case of nuclear weapons more than half a century after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we are long overdue in taking a determined step in the same direction.

Yet, in place of such determination we continue to witness re-statements of policies and postures which reaffirm the central role of nuclear weapons in strategic concepts and the
possibility of fighting war with the use of nuclear weapons. In short, we are witnessing a re-rationalization of nuclear weapons in an age when the context which gave rise to the original proliferation of nuclear weapons among the five nuclear weapon states has long disappeared.

The elements of the agenda which we have set before you are not in themselves novel. Each of these elements has been the subject of detailed consideration. In this review process we are called upon jointly to develop nuclear disarmament objectives on the basis of the Treaty and the Principles and Objectives of 1995. What the New Agenda advocates is a coherence in approach that could be attained with the necessary political commitment.

The achievement of our common goal requires action by all states. We do not seek to interfere in the details of those negotiations which are the primary responsibility of the nuclear weapon states. We acknowledge the prime responsibility of the United States and the Russian Federation in providing the leadership and first steps in nuclear force reductions. We welcome the ratification of the START II Treaty by the Russian Federation and urge the United States to complete the ratification procedure as soon as possible so that full and effective implementation of the Treaty can proceed. We acknowledge the unilateral measures undertaken by two of the five nuclear weapon states but call for the early involvement of all five nuclear weapon states in bringing about the elimination of their respective nuclear forces. We consider that the principle of irreversibility should be applied to all disarmament measures. We look to greater transparency as the nuclear disarmament process gains pace.

We recognize that the process of nuclear weapons elimination will take time, even with the implementation of an accelerated program of force reductions. But we are also conscious that the nuclear weapon states parties have a responsibility to undertake interim measures consistent with a determination to lessen the prospect of the unleashing of nuclear weapons whether by design or accident before they are eliminated. The measures which we advance are those which our governments consider achievable if not in all cases with immediate effect, but at least in step with underlying nuclear force reductions:
- we propose that the outcome of any evaluation of nuclear policies and postures should result in the adoption of non-first use strategies by all nuclear weapon states among themselves and of non-use with respect to non-nuclear weapon states.

- we propose that de-alerting and arrangements for the separation of warheads from delivery vehicles be progressively advanced.

- we underline the importance of withdrawing non-strategic nuclear weapons from deployment and their elimination.

- we advocate the provision of security assurances of a legally binding nature to all non-nuclear weapon states parties.

In the process of nuclear disarmament, the priority pursuit of force reductions by the nuclear weapon states must be paralleled by the conclusion of instruments necessary to guarantee the conditions of confidence required for a world without nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament is the responsibility of all states and all states must be involved in the process leading to this goal. The maintenance of a nuclear weapons free world will require an instrument or a series of instruments negotiated multilaterally, which will result in a non-discriminatory and universal nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was an essential building block in the nuclear disarmament agenda. The urgent commencement of negotiations on a fissionable materials treaty must be another essential element, providing as it would the beginnings of the extension of multilateral verification to cover all fissile materials for weapons purposes, as required in a world free of nuclear weapons. Pending the conclusion and entry into force of these instruments, we call for a moratorium by the nuclear weapon states on all further production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and to uphold the purposes of the CTBT to which they are all signatories. We also urge those states non-parties that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to halt immediately production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.
The further extension and development of existing nuclear weapon free zones and respect for their status by the nuclear weapon states through adherence to the relevant protocols reinforce the global thrust of non-proliferation efforts and the international consensus that these contribute to that end. We also call for the establishment of additional nuclear weapon free zones especially in areas of tension such as the Middle East and South Asia.

To date, the Conference on Disarmament has been central to the shaping of the agenda for a world free of nuclear weapons. It is now time to advance our engagement there on the next steps as well as the overall framework necessary for the achievement of a global ban on these weapons. Other organizations, in particular the IAEA, should be mandated to intensify work on elaborating the verification mechanisms required in a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

We are encouraged by the fact that the Secretary General in his report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations proposes to give consideration “to convening a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger”. We consider that an international conference on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, which effectively complements efforts being undertaken in other settings, could facilitate the consolidation of a new agenda for a nuclear weapon free world.

Mr. President,

The States Parties of the NPT gathered here today comprise one hundred and eighty seven out of the one hundred and ninety two member states of the international community. The three states non-parties to the Treaty that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and engage in nuclear weapons development are central to the achievement of nuclear disarmament. This Review Conference must address these states non-parties and work for
their accession to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon states and for the placement of their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

We are committed to this treaty. But no treaty can be upheld, if the bargain which originally gave rise to it is not being fulfilled. This is a critical moment for the NPT. This Review Conference may be our last and best opportunity to move definitively towards the achievement of the goals of the Treaty and to deliver the security that the retention of nuclear weapons can never confer on humankind. Failure to move now or to signal new determination will make these weapons accepted currency. Nuclear power must not be perverted to endow humanity with the reckless instrument of its own destruction. The New Agenda is the advocacy of responsible and concerned states for a future in security. It is for this Conference to give this message substance by supporting the call for a new political undertaking for an accelerated process of action.

Mr. President:

Consistent with the need to identify areas in which and the means through which further progress should be sought, the delegations of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden are putting forward a working document with measures and steps regarding the obligation under Article VI to achieve nuclear disarmament, and request the Secretariat that it be circulated as an official document of this Conference.