Brazil

8th Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Main Committee III

Statement by Minister Santiago Irazabal Mourão

Let me associate myself with previous speakers in congratulating you for the assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. You can count on the cooperation of the Brazilian delegation in your endeavors.

After a period of stigmatization, we are currently witnessing a worldwide renaissance of nuclear energy as a safe, sustainable, and efficient energy source. As fossil fuel sources dwindle and the world strengthens the combat to the causes of climate change, nuclear energy will be an increasingly attractive option.

Arguments spreading hither and thither try to convince us that there is an automatic link between the increasing interest in nuclear energy and a purported increased risk of nuclear proliferation. Brazil rejects that view. To say so would suggest that the tools at our disposal to face the proliferation challenges are insufficient. The threat of proliferation has been satisfactorily dealt with over the last decades by the promotion of safeguards and stronger standards of safety and security.

Brazil strongly believe that nuclear technology is an indispensable component of social, economic, and technological development of peoples around the world, in particular of those living in developing countries. This is, by the way, the very rationale of Article IV of the NPT, which recognized the inalienable right of every State to the peaceful uses and development of nuclear energy. This right, which predates the NPT and is independent from it, must remain untouchable.

At relevant fora, we have been recently engaged in discussing multilateral aspects of the fuel cycle. Debates are still in a seminal phase, for deeper discussion is needed on fundamental questions, such as what the real utility of multilateral mechanisms for fuel supply are or under what conditions States would be eligible for access to such “fuel” or “uranium banks”. As discussions go on, we need to bear in mind that the concept of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle cannot
impinge upon the right of every State to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, nor can it hinder the normal functioning of the international market of nuclear goods and services.

Important as international cooperation in this field can be – and indeed is for Brazil and many other countries around the globe, especially in the developing world –, it is only a complement to our respective national efforts. No country can legitimately be asked to condition its access to the benefits of nuclear technology to the good will of its partners. There are many examples of countries that were denied access to nuclear goods and services to which they were entitled by force of agreements and contracts – including Brazil.

In the view of my Delegation, the purposes of this Conference as regards the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be, among others:

1. To reaffirm the inalienable right of every State to the peaceful uses and development of nuclear energy, a right which predates the NPT and is independent from it;

2. To reiterate the need for universalization of the NPT and the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements;

3. To recognize the increasing role contribution of nuclear energy to economic development;

4. To recognize the legitimacy of national peaceful nuclear programs carried out under international safeguards;

5. To reaffirm the importance of international cooperation; and, in this respect, to agree on strengthening the capabilities of the IAEA;

6. To request States Parties to bring into force the highest possible standards of safety and security;

7. To support the development of proliferation-resistant technologies.

Another division, between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ in the field of nuclear technology, will not overcome the challenges that confront the NPT. We should not ask any country to forego its legitimate rights; we must instead protect and promote those rights and, in parallel, request all countries to abide by and implement fully their longstanding obligations assumed under the NPT.