



BRAZIL

STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

I Committee
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you – and through you the other members of the Bureau - on your election to guide the deliberations of the First Committee for this year's session. Please accept our best wishes and the assurances of the full cooperation of the Delegation of Brazil. In the same vein, I wish to thank Ambassador Semakula Kiwanuka for his work as our Chairman in 2002.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Nobuyasu Abe on his appointment as Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs. May I add a word of recognition to the team at the Department of Disarmament Affairs for their professionalism and valuable support to the cause of disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

The First Committee opens its work at a time when political uncertainty and security concerns plague the armed and the unarmed alike. Sadly, recent, violent events can only add to our worst preoccupations. The world today faces daunting threats, or, as Secretary General Kofi Annan accurately pointed out, "old threats in dangerous combinations." We are bound to admit that there are solid grounds for anxiety about the future of the international order.

Brazil concurs with the assessment that prominent among contemporary threats to peace and international securities are terrorism and the prospects of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. One of the most terrifying possibilities is that non-State actors might acquire and use such weapons. We must endeavor to prevent this from ever happening, while acting within accepted principles and norms of international law. No less challenging, however, is the lack of progress, even setbacks, in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. We are seriously disappointed at disturbing signs of lack of interest in the achievement of concrete progress within the multilateral framework, despite multiple expressions of commitment to action.

Equally disquieting is the recent trend to shun the multilateral approach to issues that are, in essence, universal. "We perceive those worrisome signs", - stated President Lula in the general debate -, "as an attempt to discredit our Organization and even to divest the United Nations of its political authority". Given the need for transparency, stability and predictability, the questions of

disarmament and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are more appropriately dealt with on a multilateral basis and in a treaty-based framework.

Internationally negotiated multilateral treaties in the field of disarmament have made, and should continue to make, a fundamental contribution to international peace and security. In this regard, we are worried by emerging academic approaches which assume that the world now lives under a new, unique strategic scenario, and thus seek to revise the foundations of the disarmament and non-proliferation structure built by the international community over the past three decades.

Strict compliance by all States Parties with obligations entered into in the major instruments in the field of weapons of mass destruction, as well as universal adherence to them, is the sole possible assurance of a more stable and safe world. The fabric of the world order depends on the full observance of commitments freely undertaken.

In this connection, Brazil considers the NPT as a key component of the international security architecture. Its universalization and the full compliance with all its provisions by all parties including through the 13 practical steps adopted by consensus in 2000, are central to our commitment to strengthen this Treaty.

We call upon Israel, India and Pakistan to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States and to place their nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards; we also call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reconsider the announcement of its intention to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and upon Iran to co-operate fully and immediately with the International Atomic Energy Agency, in resolving issues arising from the implementation of their obligations. With the same emphasis, we urge the speedy fulfillment of the commitments accepted by the nuclear weapon powers under Article VI of the NPT.

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime does not preclude the pressing need for disarmament measures leading to the complete elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Non-proliferation alone will not solve common security concerns. On the contrary, the supply-side control of key technologies associated with the development of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is an important tool for combating their spread. However, care must be exercised lest peaceful programs in developing countries are arbitrarily curtailed. Without effective, verifiable and irreversible progress in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, there can be little – if any – reliable and sustainable results of non-proliferation regimes.

The notion of compliance encompasses that of progress. In our view, nuclear disarmament is a fundamental pre-requisite for a consistent and coherent policy for curbing proliferation. But instead of nuclear disarmament, or at least more vigorous signs of willingness to fulfill the “unequivocal undertaking” agreed in 2000, we notice emerging approaches to a broader role of nuclear weapons as part of security strategies, including re-rationalizations for the use, and the development of new types of such weapons. At the same time, the concept of proliferation has been somewhat blurred by efforts to confine it to the horizontal dimension, losing sight of the ever-growing threat posed by the technological upgrading or improvement of weaponry - the vertical dimension of proliferation.

For the non-nuclear-weapon world, that is to say, for those that have voluntarily renounced the military nuclear option, this opens up the abhorrent prospect of the continuing development of new nuclear arms. Some of the current strategic doctrines raise the possibility of their use against non-nuclear States, even in conventional scenarios. This would open the door for what hitherto has been conceived as unthinkable, as it would lower the threshold of actual use of nuclear weapons in war.

Mr. Chairman,

- The threat of international terrorism and the possibility that weapons of mass destruction fall in the hands of non-State actors highlight the need for the total elimination of those weapons. We believe that this is the only sure way to prevent non-State actors to acquire them. The complexity of this issue should not justify the indefinite retention of weapons of mass destruction by the States that possess them.

- The continued paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament is an example of lack of interest and absence of the political will needed to move forward. A deadlocked CD is to no one's benefit. Brazil regards as imperative the early establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the CD.

- Brazil firmly supports the CTBT. Given its non-discriminatory nature and universal scope, this Treaty represents a welcome improvement over the asymmetries prevailing in other instruments. Countries which have yet to sign and ratify it, particularly those whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, must clearly indicate their readiness to join the Treaty. This political signal becomes even more important as the actual prospect for its early entrance into force should guide the setting-up of the Treaty's International Monitoring System. There can be no formal verification regime without legally binding obligations in place.

- Nuclear-weapon free zones are a powerful tool to fulfill the aspiration of all peoples for a nuclear-weapon free world. For this reason, the international community should actively support and encourage the establishment of additional such zones and the consolidation of existing ones. The five nuclear weapon States are expected to undertake appropriate binding obligations towards such zones and they would do well to review the reservations they have made upon signing the attached protocols, as in the case of Tlatelolco.

- Brazil considers the Chemical Weapons Convention to be of major relevance in the field of disarmament and security. The implementation of the CWC, however, must be conducted in strict accordance with the principles so hardily negotiated. We are particularly concerned with the indication that the OPCW will not be able to comply with the Convention deadline for the total destruction of existing stocks of chemical weapons. We urge possessor States Parties to ensure the destruction of their arsenals, without conditions or parallelisms, in a timely manner. We also expect the verification regime of the CWC to remain fair and non-discriminatory. Finally, we regret that six years after entry into force of the Convention, States Parties to it have not yet come to an agreement on how to regulate one of its critical provisions: the cooperation for peaceful purposes.

- To act against illicit trade of small arms and light weapons is among Brazil's priorities. The conclusions of the I Biannual Meeting to consider the implementation of the Program of Action, adopted in 2001, were encouraging. With regard to the critical issue of tracing and marking, we consider that, due to the relevance of this issue, the international community should be prepared to adopt a legally binding instrument.

Mr. Chairman,

The shadow of threats to peace and security looms large at present, as the Security Council remains divided; negotiations on disarmament and related areas are stagnating, if not moving backwards; and there are growing doubts about the political fate of the General Assembly, including this First Committee.

Nevertheless, as we review the just-concluded general debate in the Plenary Hall, and read once more the highly apposite and interesting Secretary General's Report on the Millennium Decade, positive trends in some key areas may also be identified:

- 1) seldom in recent history has world public opinion given so much attention and support to the UN, and to the values of peace, security and democracy;
- 2) there seems to be wide agreement that the principle of multilateralism plays a central, active international role and that the UN serves as a needed center for harmonizing the actions of the nations, as foreseen in our Charter;
- 3) there is now a pressing need to reactivate all UN political mechanisms, so that it may fully discharge its mandate in the field of international peace and security;
- 4) the proposed UN reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly represent historic opportunities which must be explored in depth with a view to concrete action.

In this context, it should be recalled that the UN Charter entrusts the General Assembly with well-defined functions and powers regarding not only disarmament and arms regulation but also peace and security and the promotion of international political cooperation – on the understanding that the prerogatives of other principal organs must be fully preserved. Such a mandate has direct implications for the work of the First Committee, as the GA Plenary is burdened with heavy institutional and policy tasks.

Better use could be made of provisions of Articles 1.4, 11.1 and 13.1.a of our Charter. We believe that there is room for reorganizing our agenda in a coherent, methodical way. The prevailing exclusion of some items from consideration detracts from the effectiveness of the First Committee.

In other political circumstances, this situation might be perhaps tolerated, but today it should lead to a collective process of reflection and deliberation directed at (a) identifying means for strengthening the multilateral approaches to political and security affairs as well as at (b) considering recommendations on the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security and on the promotion of international cooperation in the political field.

In short, Brazil is totally committed to our disarmament agenda, but holds the view that the political and security potentialities of this body have not been put to full use. The First Committee should be re-politicized and our agenda and methods of work re-organized. This indispensable task is long overdue.

For sure, there will be a plurality of views on this matter. My Delegation will be ready to the debate on them in both this Committee and at the Plenary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.