

COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

140 EAST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR NICOLAS RIVAS, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF COLOMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, IN THE
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE**

FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 15 October 2003

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your well deserved election to preside over the work of the First Committee during this session of the General Assembly. We are confident that you, Chairman Sareva, because of your vast experience in disarmament affairs, will preside over our meetings with wisdom and balance.

Allow me also to express my gratitude to the former Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, for his important work during years in the DDA, and give a warm welcome to our new Under-Secretary General, Nobuyasu Abe, sure as we are that he will continue the good work with the same dedication and professionalism of his predecessor. He counts on an excellent team at DDA that supports to this Committee and the cause of disarmament and international security.

Mr. Chairman,

Colombia associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Peru on behalf of the country's members of the Rio Group. However, with this intervention, my delegation wishes to clarify and expand on its national position on the

various items of the agenda of this Committee, which are of particular interest to Colombia.

As in previous years, Colombia wishes to begin its intervention calling the attention of this Committee on the important contribution it should make against terrorism, which today is the most serious threat to international peace and security. Prevent mass destruction weapons from falling in the hands of terrorists should be a priority in our agenda. That is why Colombia co-sponsors since last year a resolution on this topic introduced by India. That is why we insist on universal accession to the Convention on Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and the Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Deemed to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as well as on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We also insist on the explicit prohibition of the use of these weapons of mass destruction and on restricting the development of new technologies for these weapons. There is no doubt that the best guarantee for this is the total elimination of such weapons. Countries that possess chemical weapons should proceed to destroy them in fulfilment of the Convention and submit detailed plans on this process of destruction. We must also work towards the inclusion of new arms within the scope of implementation of the Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons and towards the adoption of new protocols in this field. With regard to the Convention on Bacteriological Weapons, it is fundamental to advance on an agreement on a Verification Protocol.

Mr. Chairman,

If progress with respect to these weapons of mass destruction remains unsatisfactory, neither have the advances made with regard to the foremost weapons of mass destruction – nuclear weapons – been satisfactory. Not all members of the international community have thus far acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and there is not enough progress in the PrepCom for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Colombia reiterates the urgency of the full implementation of the Thirteen Measures for Nuclear Disarmament included in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We welcome efforts like the Moscow Treaty but we consider that we are still far from achieving the unequivocal commitments acquired by the Nuclear Weapon States, and that makes even more difficult to maintain and consolidate the non proliferation regime.

A very important juridical instrument for the global non proliferation regime is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Colombia signed this treaty in 1996 and has always acted in conformity with its spirit. We have reiterated in all international disarmament meetings our total commitment with the CTBT object as an instrument to achieve general and complete disarmament. In the Conferences to Facilitate the entry into force of the treaty we have presented the need to identify and implement specific measures to facilitate the case of Colombia, where exist a political will to ratify but also unavoidable con constitutional and legal constraint to do it.

On the issue of disarmament and non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, Colombia reiterates its belief that their total elimination is the best guarantee of international peace and security. We reject deterrence and strategic alliances doctrines, as well as the doctrine that proposes new uses for nuclear weapons, since they are based on force or the threat of use of force. We continue to believe that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is not a utopia but a necessity that is becoming increasingly imperative, given the new challenges we face to international peace and security.

Therefore we are particularly concerned that the Conference on Disarmament, the main forum for negotiations, has reached its 7th year without reaching an agreement on its programme of work regarding issues that we all recognize as being substantive and of priority importance for international security. Therefore we are also concerned that during 3 years of deliberations the UN Disarmament Commission has not been able to reach consensus on the two items currently on its agenda. Likewise, we insist on the urgency of reaching agreement on the objectives and agenda of the IV Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament (SSODIV).

Colombia insists on the necessity to maintain and consolidate a multilateral framework on international relations, particularly on disarmament and international security issues. We share critics on the lack of efficiency that in some occasions multilateralism has shown to face effectively threats to international peace and security, but we reaffirm the need to reach a renew and firm commitment on the part of all and each State with the multilateral option. We invite the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to retake its commitments with the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and allow visits by the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The development of nuclear weapons does not bring peace or consolidate security. Peace and security nowadays are not based only on military capacity, but mostly on political, economic and social factors, and particularly on good relations with neighbours and the international community as a whole.

Colombia recognises the right of all States to develop nuclear programs for pacific purposes. That is why we are committed, as all States of the IAEA, in continuing co-operation with the Islamic Republic of Iran to clarify doubts regarding its nuclear program. Colombia invites the Government of Iran to continue its co-operation with the inspectors to generate confidence in the region and the world.

Mr. Chairman,

There are two items on the agenda of this First Committee which are fundamental for Colombia. These are the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In both of these areas we register important progress.

We welcome the results of the Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention that took place in Bangkok, and insist on the urgency to finally achieve

universality for the Convention and the participation of those who are today the largest producers of this type of mines. We condemn production and indiscriminate use of mines by non-state actors and we urge the international community to prevent that from happening.

With regard to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we register with satisfaction the First Biennial Meeting to examine the implementation of the 2001 Program of Action, as well as the Secretary General's report on the feasibility to develop an international instrument that allow States identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons. We appreciate the French-Swiss initiative on this issue and commend the work of the Governmental Experts on the topic under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Sood of India.

Convinced as we are that in today's world small arms and light weapons are real mass destruction weapons, we will continue to support all initiatives on this topic. South Africa co-ordinates this year the resolution on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, that together with Japan and Colombia we have introduced to this Committee since 2001. As in previous years we expect to have the co-sponsorship of more than 100 delegations as well as a consensus approval of the initiative, that this year contains important developments.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to conclude by expressing the commitment of Colombia with the agenda on disarmament, non-proliferation and international security that considers this Committee, and by reiterating our conviction that only a multilateral and shared responsibility approach on this topics will allow us to maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism.

It is in that spirit that my delegation is ready to participate in the informal consultations that the Chairman has convened starting tomorrow. We thank the different delegations and groups that have presented initiatives to rationalise the work of this First Committee and enhance its contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. We will study these initiatives under the general framework of the revitalisation on the General Assembly and the reform of the United Nations with the objective of consolidating an effective multilateralism where this Organisation plays a central role. Thank you.