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FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT BY THE  
DELEGATION OF GUATEMALA

**GENERAL DEBATE  
FIRST COMMITTEE**

New York, 10 October 2003

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF GUATEMALA AT THE GENERAL DEBATE  
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE AT THE 58<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(10 October 2003)

Mr. Chairman:

I wish, first of all, to congratulate you on your election to chair this committee. This congratulation extends, of course, to your distinguished colleagues.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Rio Group. We nevertheless wish to present some additional reflections on certain issues that we consider relevant, as well as on the overall situation prevailing in the sphere of disarmament and international security. We shall, however, refrain from commenting on points that as is well known are of a priority nature on our agenda; nor shall we stress that much still remains to be done.

We find ourselves in a special situation, inasmuch as we all share an identical concern. That concern arises from the need for us to respond to new challenges to international security. As the Secretary-General just observed, it may be that we do not face new threats, but rather old threats that combine in new and dangerous ways. But, even though new ideas have emerged as to the means of confronting these threats, we cannot deny that our final objective, which is to combat them, remains unchanged. This already amounts to a step forward in our struggle.

Moreover we are not starting from scratch. We are all parts of one single organization, we have international instruments at our disposal, we have accepted international law and, more generally, the rule of law; and, particularly, in the area assigned to us, i. e. that of disarmament, we have available a wide range of agreements already concluded. We do not need, therefore, to re-invent the wheel. Let us, rather, endeavour with greater vigour to accomplish the goals that we have already set for ourselves.

The work of this committee has not remained leeward of the winds of reform that are blowing in this Organization. We appear to be facing a re-evaluation of our methods and of the degree of effectivity with which we move forward. We feel, however, that our committee should not be changed, inasmuch as it constitutes the most representative international forum in the area

of disarmament and international security. What can be done is to strength it. Consequently, bearing in mind that international security is a matter demanding immediate attention, we should do our best to avoid being mired in an interminable series of discussions on the procedure to be followed. Our main focus should be on the quest for the best way to breathe life into the resolutions that are properly within the purview of our committee. As I already observed, the nub of the matter is their implementation. We should, in our view, begin to convert the atmosphere of "restructuring" or "revitalizing" and start to revive our international mechanism for disarmament, regard being had to the benefits that can be gained from collective and efficient action. For the strengthening of the work of the First Committee is intrinsically bound up with the strengthening of multilateralism.

We consider that the problems of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, as well as the promotion of an adequate implementation of the existing disarmament regimes, can be addressed only through a truly effective multilateralism, one that is characterized by the strict observance of the existing international instruments. Interdependence in the area of existing international security requires that our field of action be based on the preponderant role of the United Nations.

Before concluding, I wish to comment on two specific matters that are of special concern to my delegation. We reaffirm, in the first place, our commitment to fulfil what is established both in the Plan of Action adopted by the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects as well as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personal Mines and on their Destruction. We are pleased at the measures taken at the last two meetings held in that connection, namely the ones that took place in New York and in Bangkok, and we continue to take steps in the implementation of the programmes at the national level.

We wish, moreover, to stress that we have being complementing our national efforts by the adoption of sub-regional initiatives. At the Central American level we have taken measures in accordance with the Framework Convention for Democratic Security; through mechanisms for consultation and evaluation provided for in this treaty we are coordinating actions that seek to limit and control armaments in the region. In this respect I wish to mention the Agreement for Regional

Security that was adopted last month at a meeting of the Central American Security Commission. We have thereby adopted a comprehensive programme that aims to limit armaments, promote stability, mutual confidence, transparency and the means to prevent arms from coming into the hands of armed groups operating outside the law.

We wish, finally, to associate ourselves with the efforts being made by delegations to intensify their efforts and put an end to the stagnation of disarmament machinery, thus fulfilling the commitment of some countries to disarm and of others to renounce the possession of arms. Our committee is the only body that can issue a clear and principled message that, without prejudice to full compliance with the obligations already assumed in the field of disarmament, calls for strict compliance with the corresponding undertakings, also stressing that their universal observance is the cornerstone of international peace and security.

Thank you.